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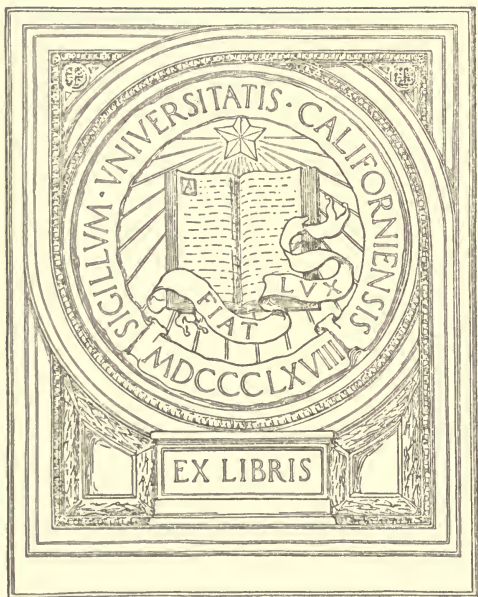


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THE CASTAWAY SERIES

THE PRAIRIE CRUSOE





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George R. Nevell

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Willie Earle from



THE PRAIRIE CRUSOE



LEE & SHEPARD.
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THE
PRAIRIE CRUSOE;

OR,

Adventures in the Far West.

A STORY FOR BOYS.



ILLUSTRATED.

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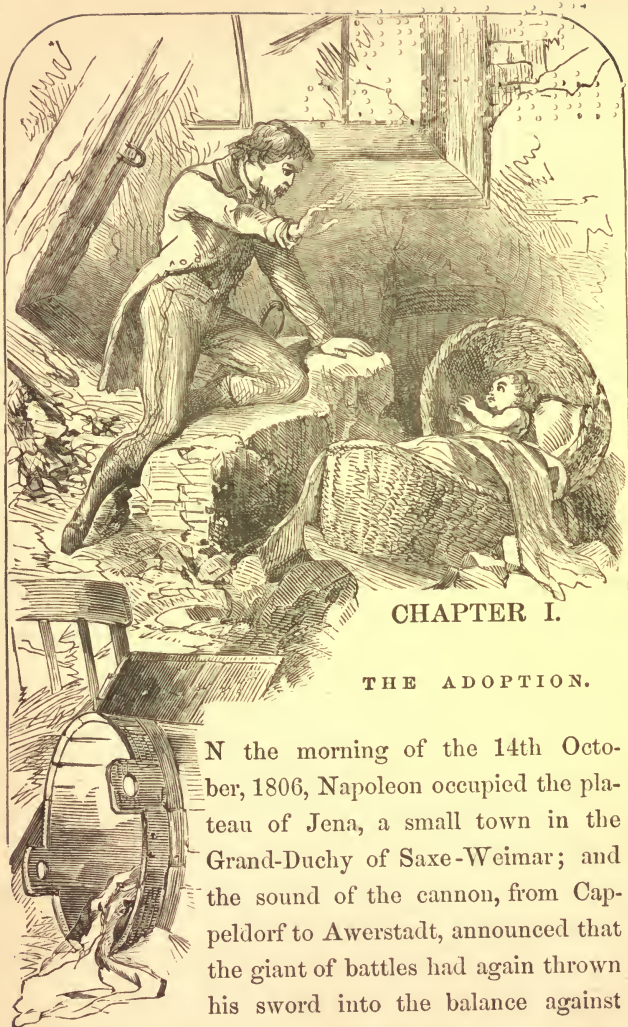
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CHAPTER I.

THE ADOPTION.

IN the morning of the 14th October, 1806, Napoleon occupied the plateau of Jena, a small town in the Grand-Duchy of Saxe-Weimar; and the sound of the cannon, from Capfeldorf to Awerstadt, announced that the giant of battles had again thrown his sword into the balance against the scale where the fate of nations rested.

After most prodigious efforts, the Prussian army, 150,000 strong, was defeated and put to flight; leaving 25,000 on the field of battle, and 30,000 prisoners in the hands of the French.

The vast plain presented a horrid sight: dead and dying were everywhere heaped together, remaining from a fearful struggle; while the farms and villages, which but the day before had been the image of peace and happiness, were now the prey of devouring flames.

The action had been most severe in the vicinity of Holstedt. This village had been taken and retaken several times, and was now but a heap of smoking ruins, through which hurried the unfortunate Prussians, pursued by Murat's victorious cavalry.

One officer, grievously wounded, after fighting bravely, was abandoned by his comrades, and obliged to seek refuge in the ruins of a house which had suffered severely from shot and shell. He had already served with great distinction, and was living in quiet retirement in a small house which he owned, when hostilities recommenced. He hastened to offer the use of his sword to his country; and, if he did not meet his death on the field of Jena, it was not because he did not expose himself to danger. Berchtold (for so he was called) had just sat down in the midst of this scene of devastation, when he heard the feeble

cries of a young child, apparently quite near him. Actuated by a feeling of humanity, he forgot his own wounds, and directed his steps towards the spot whence the sounds seemed to come, and resting against a half-burnt wall of the same ruined house where he had sought shelter, and which seemed on the point of falling, found a cradle, and in it a charming little boy about six or seven months old, reaching out his little arms, and calling his mother, who probably had perished, unable to save her child.

Berchtold, touched with compassion, hastened to raise the child in his arms; and a tear of joy stole down the rugged cheek of the old soldier as the little one pulled his mustache, and a smile replaced the tears which had been occasioned by its infantile fears. Regardless of his own wounds, and finding a new courage in the very task which Providence seemed to assign to him, he snatched a coverlid, which he wrapped about the little one as best he could, and started off, though suffering great pain, in the direction opposite to the field of battle.

He was met by a party of French cavalry, who, seeing his uniform, wished to detain him as a prisoner. The officer in command of the detachment, however, taking pity on him and on the little fellow whom he carried, gave orders to let him pass in safety, who amid such carnage and desolation, though grievously

wounded, exposed so freely his own life and liberty to preserve the existence of one of God's creatures.

Berchtold thanked the French officer gratefully, and continued on his way. At the first village, he made inquiries concerning the parents of the child; but no one could give him any information. He resolved, therefore, to keep it himself, since he had no family, and was alone in the world. Buying a goat, which he gave to William (as he called his little friend) for a nurse, he adopted him as his own child.

He recovered speedily from his wounds; and, when peace was concluded, he was allowed to leave the military service with a pension sufficient to keep him comfortably the rest of his days. So he made up his mind to settle himself in the little cottage which he owned, in the kingdom of Wurtemberg, near the city of Freudenstadt, and not far from the frontier of the Duchy of Baden. There was, attached to the house, a garden large enough to produce all the fruits and vegetables which he could desire; while the close proximity of the Black Forest would allow the little William, when he increased in years, the pleasures of the chase for the development of his physical strength.

He set out on his journey, crossed Bavaria, and reached Frèudenstadt without accident; whence he passed to his home at once. In a very few days he was installed, his garden dug, the grain sowed, the

trees nicely trimmed, and every thing in good, comfortable shape.

He was now happy; for the good action which he had performed occasioned him great satisfaction, and won the approval of his conscience.

Retired in his little cottage, and seeing very few people (for he was at some distance from other habitations), he lived almost entirely with his adopted child and the goat, which seemed every day more and more attached to its young charge. At the least cry, the intelligent animal hastened with its rich milk to appease little William. The old soldier became daily fonder of his little one, who grew strong with his increasing age, and soon began to imitate the gambols of his nurse, and even to say a few words. The first of these more than recompensed the old man for all his trouble; and, when William was able to understand him, his adopted father took him on his knees, and described all the battles in which he had taken part, and all the fatigues which he had endured. He spoke with so much energy and animation, that the child was never weary of listening to him. Hence, from his tenderest years, the taste for an adventurous and wandering life was formed in him, and influenced his after-career. Berchtold taught him to read and write; and William, whose intelligence and good-will were equally great, made very rapid progress, so that in a

few years he was almost as well instructed as his teacher.

The latter also gave him that true instruction of the heart which is the best basis for every other. Honest and loyal himself, his morality was simple, but very correct.

"William," said he, "never utter an untruth, even to save your life; for an honest man must never soil his lips by a falsehood.

"Never blaspheme the name of your Maker.

"Never do any thing to injure your neighbor.

"In a word, love and fear God, and aid your neighbor whenever you can.

"Always remember, that, in whatever position man may be placed, a pure conscience is the greatest wealth which he can possess; and this no man can take from him."

With this simple education, William reached his twelfth year. He was stouter and stronger than are most children of that age, and was endowed with a courage which became at times rash, and once, indeed, almost cost him his life.

CHAPTER II.

THE WOLF.—EDUCATION OF WILLIAM.

ONE winter morning, when he had led out the goat to browse, his love of adventure and curiosity drew him to the very confines of the Black Forest; but he had scarcely passed within the shadows of the snow-covered pines when he was attracted by the bleatings of his nurse. Turning towards the spot where she stood, he saw her with neck outstretched and eyes fixed, while her whole body trembled violently. Astonished at these signs of fear, he hurried towards her, wondering what could be the occasion of her alarm; but he was not long in suspense, as his eyes fell on an animal, which, from the description so often given by his father, he knew to be a wolf.

At first, it must be acknowledged, William was frightened, and stood motionless; but quickly over-

coming his indecision, and knowing that he was alone to protect his dear old friend, he advanced boldly, and placed himself between her and the ferocious beast. The wolf, furious with hunger, bared his sharp teeth, and approached to spring upon the child. The latter had only a heavy oaken staff with which to defend himself; but he awaited the animal boldly, and gave him a violent blow on the head. The wolf staggered, and William profited by this to repeat the blow: but the ground was slippery with the frozen snow; and, losing his balance, over he rolled.

As the wolf again rushed at him, he recalled the instructions of his adopted father, and called on Him who never abandons the weak. God heard his prayer; for, recovering his self-possession as the wolf opened his terrible fangs and he could almost feel his hot breath upon his cheek, he bethought himself of his sharp knife. In an instant, drawing it, he plunged it into the throat of the animal. The wolf retreated for a moment, with a terrible howl, but then sprang at him again. This time, William, rising on his knees, threw his left arm around the neck of the animal, and struck him repeatedly with his knife. For a moment it was impossible to distinguish victor from vanquished, as they rolled together in the thick stream of blood which escaped from the deep wounds of the savage brute.

At last, after a short but fearful struggle, William felt the embrace of the wolf diminish, and the horrid beast drew his last breath in a prolonged howl of agony.

The poor child was now covered with blood. His chest and his arms deeply wounded with the huge teeth and claws of the brute, he was too weak to rise. He felt a veil closing over his eyes; and, with his thoughts turned to heaven, he murmured the name of the God who had hitherto protected him, with that of his father, and became senseless.

The unfortunate boy remained more than two hours on the snow, where he would doubtless have died, if the painful bleatings of his goat, which walked around him, and pressed its muzzle into his face, as if trying to awake him, had not attracted the attention of several hunters who had lost their way while following a fox. They were glad to hear the bleatings of a domestic animal, thinking that they could not be far from some habitation, where they could learn the route which they ought to follow. But what was their surprise to find a child, bathed in blood! for William was covered with what had been lost by his enemy. At first, they fancied that the boy had been murdered; but, perceiving the dead wolf, they quickly saw the true state of the case.

One of the hunters, who had some knowledge of surgery, examined the child's wounds, and decided that they were slight, and that he had fainted more from emotion and fatigue than from the loss of blood. A few drops of cordial sufficed to re-animate William, and put him in a condition to relate what had happened.

They congratulated him on his good heart and intrepidity; and, as he was too weak to walk alone, they hastened to carry him to Berchtold's house. We will not attempt to describe the interview between William and his father. The poor man, while praising him for his courage and coolness, could not help blaming him for his imprudence. He was happy to see the firm character of his beloved pupil; yet he trembled at the thought that he might have lost the boy, who was at once his joy and consolation.

This adventure decided William's future.

One of the hunters, the Baron of Wolfensheim, who possessed a splendid castle about eight miles from Berchtold's cottage, saw with pleasure that his son, a boy of thirteen, who accompanied him, was attracted by the courage which the young peasant had shown. He talked with William; and discovering that he had excellent moral principles, and wished to acquire more knowledge, he acceded with pleasure to his son Stanis-

las' request to invite William to come to Wolfensheim and see the library.

From this time, the visits from the cottage to the castle were frequent. William often assisted at the lessons received by the young baron ; and on his return home he remembered what he had heard, and tried to study the books which were readily and kindly lent him. Stanislas helped his efforts, and the baron was pleased to see the emulation between them.

The works which William read with most avidity were accounts of voyages and travels. The dangers and perils encountered by the hardy explorers whose exploits were related, filled his young mind completely. He saw himself, in thought, the hero of extraordinary adventures. It seemed as if the Black Forest and all the surrounding country were too narrow a space for him, and the only thing which kept him at Freudenstadt was his deep affection for his father. He also read natural history, and studied eagerly, that he might learn to understand the great truths written in the book of Nature, which always lies open before us. He conversed frequently with the baron, who was a person of more than usual learning ; and his intelligence became rapidly developed, and increased. With that activity of mind natural to all chosen natures, he wished to examine every thing and know every thing ; so that, without neglecting physical

exercise, riding, hunting, &c., he managed to learn English and French, as well as to acquire a good fund of general knowledge which was most useful to him in after-years.



CHAPTER III.

WILLIAM'S DEPARTURE. — HIS ARRIVAL IN AMERICA.

FOUR years passed away in this quiet and peaceful manner. But grief was now to visit poor William. His adopted father fell sick, and took to his bed for the last time; soon growing aware that his last hour was come, notwithstanding the care and devotion shown him by his beloved boy.

"My child," said he, one evening when he felt more than usually feeble, "I am going to die, and leave you alone on earth. Never forget the precepts which I taught you: always do your duty, and you will be happy. Do not cry," he added, hearing the sobs of the unhappy young man. "Remember that death is sweet to the man who has nothing with which to reproach himself. Adieu, my son! I bless you and" —. But he could not finish the sentence he had commenced; for death had released his soul from the chains of this life.

William, stricken with grief, remained insensible to the sweet consolation offered by Stanislas, and seemed to exist only in the grief and sorrow which flooded his lonely heart. He only roused himself at last when he was called upon to follow to the grave the mortal remains of him who had watched over his earliest infancy, and who had, to the day of his death, been so good a father to him.

In about a month after Berchtold's death, the Baron of Wolfensheim represented to him that he was no longer a child, but that he must overcome his grief and choose a condition of life. The baron offered to assist and protect him in whatever course he might select. Stanislas, who had been named an officer in the hussars, hoped that his friend would decide upon entering his regiment, where he knew that the powerful influence of the baron could easily obtain his promotion. But William acknowledged, that from boyhood he had always loved to think of long voyages and distant travels; and that the accounts of hardy navigators, and the hair-breadth perils through which they had passed, which he had so eagerly read, had only increased his natural desire to become a sailor. Great as was the regret of the baron and his son to find in William the love of an avocation which would lead him far from them, they did not seek to turn him from his project, feeling certain that their young friend could

not fail to succeed in a career embraced from choice. The baron used his influence to procure him a good position; and it was decided that he should embark on the "Washington," which ship was then lying at Hamburg, about to set sail for America.

The day for his departure was a sad one for William, who felt that he was leaving the only persons on earth who took an interest in him, and that he would henceforth have to make his way among strangers; but his natural firmness did not abandon him, and he repressed his already rising tears that he might not cause a new grief to his friends.

He felt deeply grieved to leave the goat, which had been with him in the happy days of childhood; and, that it might not be ill treated by strangers, he gave it to young Bertha, Stanislas' sister. The little girl, who liked William very much, promised him, amid her sobs, to take great care of it, and, with the innocence of her age, asked him to bring her many pretty things when he came back.

The baron and Stanislas had decided on accompanying William as far as Hamburg, in order to recommend him to his captain. The journey was quickly made; and, on the 1st of March, William embraced his benefactors for the last time before his departure. Stanislas made him promise to send news as often as he could; and they parted, pledging an eternal friend-

ship. The baron recalled to his mind the wise counsels of his adopted father, and added other advice applicable to his new career. At last, it was necessary to separate; and the poor young man saw his friends get into the boat which would separate them from him, perhaps, alas! forever. He remained on deck until the land, disappearing gradually on the horizon, was scarcely a perceptible line; and at last it faded entirely from his sight.

Nothing remarkable happened during the voyage until they entered the Gulf of Mexico, when a great storm arose, perilling the lives of our young adventurer and his companions. In the midst of the confusion, William showed great coolness, and an ability which was not looked for, so much so as to win the compliments of the captain and the congratulations of his comrades.

Our young friend had, however, mistaken his real vocation. In becoming a sailor, he had been led by his adventurous spirit, his love of travel, and a taste for natural history, rather than by an actual desire to follow the sea; but, accustomed from early youth to sacrifice inclination to duty, he had succeeded by his obedience, his good conduct, and his exactness in fulfilling all his duties, in winning the esteem of the officers and men.

The magnificent vegetation which he perceived

everywhere along the shore made him anxious to reach the land: hence he eagerly seized the opportunity to go on shore in the long-boat with a party who landed to fill their water-casks in Turtle Bay,—so called from the great number of turtles which come there to deposit their eggs in the sand.

As soon as they reached the shore, William, who was free from duty, took his gun and ammunition, with some provisions, and advanced into the country. He soon came to the confines of a large forest. The immense trees and beautiful flowers of America, so different from those of his own country, attracted the attention of the young wanderer; and passing from one object to another, anxious to examine all, he went farther than he imagined, or had intended to do.

After walking several hours, beginning to feel hungry, William stopped to eat the little provision which he had brought with him; and, thinking that the hour must be come for him to regain the boat, he arose quite joyous, thinking, with a presumption natural to his age, that he could easily find his way back to it. However, he was mistaken. He did not possess the wonderful faculty of the Indians, who find their way in the dense forests where no path has been trodden; so that, the more he walked, the less he appeared likely to discover the way back to the shore. The sun was now setting: so, thinking that he would

find it still more difficult to trace his path in the darkness, he took the resolution to ascend a tree to pass the night; and, recommending himself to God, the courageous lad very quickly lost the memory of his trouble in his youthful dreams.



CHAPTER IV.

THE PRAIRIES.—A TRAPPER.

ON awakening, he examined very carefully the ground about him, and discerned by the moisture of the soil that he must be near a stream.

In fact, a short distance farther on, he found a rivulet, which, freeing itself from the earth and moss, flowed along in a little silvery current. The banks were covered with a beautiful green turf, whose freshness contrasted charmingly with the foliage above, and the pure white lilies which lifted their heads above the gentle waves. The trees bordering the water had laced and interlaced their branches, forming a kind of natural canopy, which the bright beams of the risen sun with difficulty penetrated. Thousands of creeping plants, covered with orange, purple, and white flowers, hung from the branches like so many garlands gracefully twined above the murmuring brook. At the

least breath of wind, a perfect shower of flowers covered the earth, and added to the beauty of the scene; while here and there gay butterflies danced from stem to stem.

Suddenly an aquatic bird started from the thick underbrush; and William, drawn from his ecstacy by the sound of its wings, levelled his gun, and killed it. He had already begun to feel the approach of hunger: so, collecting broken branches and dry leaves, he built a fire, and roasted his game. The limpid water quenched his thirst, and gave a zest to his first savage meal.

After he had thus refreshed his natural hunger, his strength was quite renewed: and William started on, following always the course of the stream, which must, he argued, lead him to the sea-shore; but, contrary to his very natural belief, the deeper he penetrated the forest, the farther he receded from the coast.

For many long and weary days he walked almost constantly, without any other result than becoming thoroughly bewildered. At last he grew discouraged, feeling that he was lost in one of the immense American forests, without any hope of finding his vessel, which doubtless had sailed away, leaving him on shore in this wild spot. His supply of powder was nearly exhausted, and he saw himself without any further means of procuring subsistence. Still he

would not despair, knowing that whoever puts his confidence in Divine Providence is never abandoned by the Deity.

The stream, which he had until now followed, had lost itself in a ravine, closed in by vines, trees, and bushes so densely as to form an impenetrable barrier. He gave up attempting to follow it any farther, and directed his steps as due north as he could, hoping to find some great river which might possibly lead him to some settlement where he could ask for hospitality.

Day after day he pursued his course across prairies and through forests, which successively presented themselves, divided by numerous water-courses, which he waded through or swam across in safety; when, at a little opening in the woods, he saw a man standing with a long rifle poised upon his shoulder. It was a trapper named Lewis, who, hearing the noise which William made walking in the wood, and not knowing what enemy he might have to encounter, examining the forest in his direction, was prepared for any chance.

William, happy to see a human being once more, ran towards Lewis; but the latter made him a sign to stop, and, raising his rifle, asked him in English who he was. Surprised at such a reception, our young friend obeyed, and related in a few words the circum

stances which had led him into this place, and the distress in which he then was.

Immediately the trapper advanced, and held out his hand cordially, and, with a frankness characteristic of that class of men, promised him aid and protection.

"As to finding your vessel again," said he, "you must not think of it. We are very far from the bay where you landed; and, moreover, they would not wait for you. Your captain believes you dead, and he has reason to do so; for it is a miracle for you to have travelled for weeks in such a country as this, surrounded by every conceivable danger, and yet to have preserved your life. If you wish to follow my fortunes for a while, and share my fatigues and my labors, I will teach you the mysteries of the wandering life which we, the dwellers in the Great West, lead; and that may be of use to you. When the hunting season is over, we will go to St. Louis, where you will find an opportunity to return to Europe. Until that time, you will find me a devoted friend in whom you may rely, as I trust I may in you when occasion offers."

Lewis grasped William's hand again, and gave it a good hearty shake.

We will now give way to our hero himself, whose account of the principal events which he witnessed,

and in many of which he himself played an important part, was written carefully by him in after-years:—

“I accepted gratefully the offer of the brave trapper, and thanked him from the bottom of my heart for the unlooked-for assistance which he afforded me in my loneliness and helplessness. His proposal was of a nature to please me, for I saw with joy before me a life completely in harmony with my adventurous tastes, and love of travel.

“After our frugal meal, composed of crackers, a slice of buffalo-meat dried in the sun, and some pure water from a neighboring brook, we set off.

“We usually walked from daybreak until the heat of the sun became too powerful. We would then seek the shelter of the trees, and Lewis, after carefully examining the vicinity, prepared our meal. A flexible branch, resting upon two other forked branches, served as a spit whereon to roast whatever game we had killed. Then, lighting our pipes, Lewis related to me the varied and sometimes terrible episodes of a trapper’s life: he made me acquainted with the manners and customs of the different tribes of the Indians, and taught me the more common words in their various dialects.

“After the heat of the sun had decreased, we would continue our journey until night, hunting, setting our traps, and sometimes, when we had unusually fine

sport, preparing and packing the furs of the animals we had shot the past day.

“At night we rested in the thick grass, one keeping watch for a few hours while the other slept. Lewis sometimes would not light a fire to preserve us from wild beasts, because the smoke would betray us to the Indians, who might make us pay dearly for our imprudence.

“For several days we ascended one of the tributaries of the Missouri, whose course is very irregular. Now enclosed between enormous rocks, or by the winding lines of the small hills, which stretched away in the distance, the river would narrow in its bed, and precipitate its waters violently beneath the thick branches of the immense trees which lined either bank, and whose foliage, meeting above, formed a beautiful arch: then, on the contrary, extending itself in the broad valleys between the hills, it formed immense lakes, where the current was scarcely visible; thus making, as it were, a chain of inland seas and streams.

“Flowers, most lovely and most varied in hue, carpeted these plains, and multitudes of richly plumed birds made the wilderness alive, as they passed from tree to tree and flower to flower.

“Reaching an elbow of the river, Lewis entered a valley about three or four miles wide, open at the sides, and stretching away, as the elevation gradually

increased, towards immense forests, which were just visible on the horizon. The heat was intense, and the perspiration ran down our faces freely, although the sun was hidden in a dense mass of vapor. Heavy black clouds began to show themselves on every side, driven by a wind which had not yet reached us; for the fresh morning breeze had died away.

“Lewis had already shown some signs of inquietude: he looked at the different quarters of the heavens, and hurried on. All at once he stopped, and turned towards me. ‘William,’ said he, ‘if we do not wish to perish here, we must gain yonder rising ground as quickly as possible. In a very short time, this plain will be nothing but an immense lake, and every thing on it will be swallowed up.’

“Onward we sped, as rapidly as possible, towards the heights which bordered this vast amphitheatre.”

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CHAPTER V.

INUNDATION.—THE RED-SKINS.

“EVERY thing seemed, as Lewis afterwards told me, to forebode one of those terrific hurricanes, which pass with lightning speed, tearing up and overthrowing every thing that comes in their way. The sky was of a dull lead-color: here and there, spots of dazzling white, or of copper-color, seemed to hold together the immense masses of black clouds which rolled along over and through each other in angry rage. From the extremity of the horizon rose a dark point into the only less dark sky, whose course was directed towards the centre of the valley.

“Disorder was not less apparent on the earth, so peaceful and smiling a short hour since. Flocks of birds sped rapidly over the level ground, towards the forest, uttering sharp cries. Troops of bisons and

antelopes, in serried masses, made the ground tremble beneath their wildly living rush.

“A grisly bear, and a female jaguar with her young, were amongst them. They had forgotten their own ferocity, and sought only to avoid the danger which their instinct revealed to them.

“Animals of every kind had but one feeling, that of danger.

“We had scarcely reached an immense rock, which overlooked the whole of the plain, and established ourselves beneath an enormous araucaria, when the hurricane burst forth in all its fury.

“A low rumbling was audible in the distance. The earth seemed agitated by some internal movement, the trees trembled from their very roots; but not a breath of wind. Suddenly, down came the torrent, and a fearful convulsion succeeded the suspense of pain. The giant trees bent like reeds, and, crashing together, were hurled into the air by the violence of the tempest. In an instant, these monarchs of the wood were destroyed, leaving bare the rocks which the lapse of ages had left respected.

“This scene of horror was made still more terrible by the sharp and vivid flashes of the blue lightning, while the thunder pealed through the heaven, and was re-echoed in the distance. The low, distant rumbling, which I had already noticed, approached; and, by the

glimmer of the lightning, I saw a white line, the whole width of the valley, advancing with angry speed towards the steep ascent. It was the rushing water from above precipitating itself into the open space before it.

“In a very few minutes, as Lewis had said, the waves covered all the plain stretched at our feet, and formed only a fearful torrent, sweeping away in its surging flood the trunks of huge trees, shattered rocks, and the bodies of animals surprised before a shelter could be found. One grisly bear alone, probably the same one which had passed near us, was swimming stoutly in the midst of the torrent. He endeavored to find some safe spot not yet submerged; but we saw him seize the branches of a tree, which turned over, and he disappeared. A real flood of rain increased the sublime horror of the scene. It fell in immense sheets, and so compressed the atmosphere as to almost take away the power of respiration. Every ravine, every depression of the soil, had become a torrent; and the rock where we stood formed an island in the midst of this sea, which barely a few minutes had sufficed to create.

“This rain announced the end of the storm. It commenced to lessen its violence; and, in an hour, the sky began to clear. Gradually the clouds disappeared

from the horizon, and the rays of the sun illumined the scene of desolation.

“We passed the night on the rock, and, at dawn of day, we recommenced our journey through the valley, whence the waters had almost subsided. Here and there, indeed, they still stood in large ponds. The prairie, so green and flourishing the day before, was soiled by the deposits from the mountains. Dead bodies of animals were stretched upon the ground, or caught in the branches of uprooted trees. Such, however, is the power of vegetation in these countries, that a few days would suffice to make every trace of the tempest disappear.

“The sun dries up the stagnant waters, the earth is enriched by the alluvial deposits, and troops of vultures devour the flesh of the rotting brutes that have fallen victims to the fury of the tempestuous hurricane.

“I had been astonished that Lewis, ordinarily so prudent, should have sought a refuge beneath a tree whose size and height must, as I naturally thought, have attracted the lightning; and so I observed to him.

“‘In the first place,’ said he, ‘I had no choice. We had to avoid the danger which menaced us as quickly as possible. If we had remained in the valley, we

must have been inevitably engulfed by the torrent, or crushed to death amongst the buffaloes and other wild animals which were fleeing in every direction; whereas, in taking refuge beneath a resinous tree, such as the araucaria, we ran less risk than beneath one of a different kind. The lightning rarely strikes pines or fir-trees, or larch-trees, because the gum which impregnates them is a bad conductor for electricity. Still we cannot trust to that wholly; although, yesterday, several trees not so high as the one which we chose were struck. Nevertheless, as wise men invariably do, of two dangers to which we are exposed, we must choose the lesser.'

"While talking thus, we had reached the edge of the valley, and, cutting a way with a hatchet through a wood where the undergrowth and vines were very dense and tangled, we reached a fine table-land extending far beyond the range of the eye. It was dotted with small clumps of young trees, and enormous rocks, which some terrible revolution of Nature had evidently hurled from the high mountains whose blue peaks were visible on the verge of the horizon.

"All at once Lewis stopped, stooped down, and pointed out to me some tracks which had recently been left on the damp ground.

"'A man's foot-print,' said he. 'Two Indians of the *Blackfeet* tribe have passed here only a short while

since, following the same route as we do. I can tell them by the imprint of their moccasins.'

"I remarked that I could see only the track of one man, and that he told me there were two.

"'Stoop down,' he answered, 'and notice that the leathern string which fastens the moccason of the second Indian is not in exactly the same place as that of the first. They were walking in the same track, as they invariably do, with extreme cunning, in order to conceal their number by making only one trail; but the mark of the string on the foot of the last has crossed and half obliterated the print of the first. There were two, and but two, I am certain.'

"I was astonished at such sagacity, and began to understand how much the wild life which I now led required experience, coolness, and observation. After examining our arms, and making sure that they were in good order, we continued our way, following the trail, which Lewis detected with wonderful facility.

"At about two miles from the place where we were, there rose from the midst of the plain a mass of rocks, heaped one upon another, and topped with trees, roots, and vines. The trail which we were upon led to this spot. After walking about half an hour, we came close to these rocks; and Lewis told me to go round to the left, while he would follow the trail, which led to the right. He recommended me to use very great

prudence, warning me to keep at a little distance from the brush, and not to make use of my arms except in a case of absolute necessity. If we needed each other, we were to imitate the note of the turkey-buzzard, and go to the spot whence came the signal.

“I made the turn without finding any thing suspicious; and, when I got round the rocks, I found Lewis resting on his carbine, waiting for me. ‘There was nothing to disturb us,’ said he; ‘but here are the prints of our Blackfeet, leading towards the plain. We will keep in pursuit.’

“After going some distance, Lewis stopped again with an air of astonishment and inquietude.

“‘Here is something new,’ he observed. ‘Thus far they walked regularly, and without hurrying; but here they began to run. See the print of the moccasins; the toes are printed deeply, the heel does not touch at all, and the steps are much longer. They ran separately, and without taking the trouble to keep in each other’s footsteps. Something extraordinary obliged them to change their step. Come on!’

“We hurried along.”

CHAPTER VI.

THE GRISLY BEAR AND THE BLACKFOOT.

“I OUGHT, perhaps, to explain that no regular road traverses these vast plains, nor is there any path indicated across them. Indeed, it would seem impossible to him who treads them for the first time, to obtain any clew to serve him as a guide through these wild solitudes. Yet it is not so. Without counting the rocks, the trees, the hills, and the streams, which serve as landmarks for the direction both of the Indian and the trapper, there are innumerable little paths, called trails, formed by the different wild animals, which are thickly scattered through these regions. Each species of beast in going to drink, or returning to its regular resort, follows its own track; and this is never confounded with that of any other class. This forms a perfect net-work of thousands of little paths, which

the practised eye of the native, as well as that of the white hunter, distinguishes easily, and by or across which he guides himself without the slightest hesitation.

“Lewis, therefore, still followed the trail he had previously pursued, until he suddenly paused, and called my attention to another which crossed it. It was the mark of a heavy tread of enormous length and size, which one might have taken for the print from the foot of a giant, were it not for the long claws, which were dented heavily in the earth, and showed very clearly that an animal of huge size must have passed along it.

“‘This is the footprint of a grisly bear,’ said Lewis. ‘Now I understand the flight of the Blackfeet. Let us hurry on, and be ready for any chance. Perhaps we may arrive in time to save the lives of these unfortunate men; for the trail is quite fresh, and leads directly towards the pile of rocks that lie close to the little grove before us.’

“It seemed to me that it might have been more prudent for us to change our route than to expose ourselves to a meeting with that terrible animal, whose strength and intrepidity are only equalled by its ferocity. The only possible means of an escape from it, when encountered, is to kill it; and this is an extremely difficult matter, on account both of the

thickness of its hide and fur, as well as its exceeding tenacity of life.

“Monstrous in its proportions, and with long and very muscular limbs, the grisly runs with great speed. An excellent swimmer, it traverses the most rapid torrents and the widest rivers without difficulty. While, so great is its strength, that it can break the skull of the bison with a single blow from its paw.

“‘You know that I am tolerably prudent,’ said Lewis, in reply to my observations, as he continued his way. ‘There are, however, times when prudence becomes cowardice. Mind, my boy, I do not style a temerity which is profitable to no one courage. But here the case is a very different one. We have, perhaps, the chance offered us to save the life of one of our fellow-beings. Whatever his color may be, let us not forget that he is, like us, a child of the great God, who made all men. He is an enemy, you may perhaps say. The assistance which we shall, in all probability, succeed in rendering him, will possibly render him a true friend; and, in the wilderness, my lad, a friend is more than a treasure. Those affections are deep and tenacious which spring up between men who have run the same risks, or exposed their lives for each other. Nor should we refrain, on account of danger, when there is a possibility of our saving the life of even our

bitterest foe. In Europe you call him a friend whom you meet in a drawing-room, or with whom you sit down to dinner. You meet two or three times, and then you promise each other eternal fidelity, like Jonathan and David. But only let David want to borrow so much money from Jonathan, without having any security to offer, and what is your friendship worth? Jonathan refuses David, and David separates himself from Jonathan. The friendship is ended at once. Here in the desert we don't lend our money (coin would be of little use); but we give our lives for our friends, or for a stranger. So, my dear William, let us assist these unfortunates if there is still time. What we would have others do for us we ought always to be ready to do for them.'

"It was not often that Lewis made such a long speech as this. He was evidently deeply moved; and my heart reproached me for having exposed myself to such a reproof.

"Here, at a distance of two thousand miles from my own country, amidst these wilds, I heard a man, almost a child of Nature, recall to my careless will the beautiful precepts which my dear fostering-father, Berchthold, and the baron my worthy protector, had so often impressed upon me. I blushed deeply as I thought how true it was, that morality has no country, but is

innate in the hearts of all loyal and honest men, and hurried on after Lewis, who had been rapidly advancing all the time that he had been speaking.

“As we marked the steps of the bear, whose huge tread covered the footprints of the Indians, actually almost effacing their trail, it was very evident that it was in close pursuit, and was probably gaining upon them rapidly. When but a few yards from the rocks which we had perceived in the distance, we heard cries, and exclamations of rage, intermingled with fierce growls. A terrible struggle was evidently going on behind them, and, hastening our steps to a rapid run as we rounded the mass of rock, we at length saw what was taking place.

“An enormous bear, with its mouth and fangs covered with blood, was pursuing one of the Blackfeet, who had just wounded it with his lance.

“On seeing the unexpected assistance which was offered him, he sprang towards us.

“In another moment, the luckless Indian would have been destroyed by the powerful blow of the monstrous brute.

“I was but a single foot in advance of Lewis. As the Indian leaped aside, that he might not prevent my aim, I fired. I was but at the distance of some ten feet from the animal; but, whether from nervousness or not, I only succeeded in striking it in one of its fore-

legs, quite close to the shoulder. For a moment, the huge beast paused, as if astonished to meet with a second foe; then shaking its wounded fore-foot in the air, with a savage and hideous growl, as deep but more dissonant than thunder, it abandoned its pursuit of the Indian, and rushed fiercely towards me. The wound which I had inflicted but a moment since did not seem to have caused it the slightest inconvenience; for, as Lewis afterwards explained to me, the grisly bear is not only extremely tenacious of its life, but will suffer comparatively little from wounds which would completely disable other wild animals. Not infrequently, as he told me, it will travel for many miles after being severely wounded: nay, it will even survive for several hours, after receiving many balls through the lungs and heart. For this reason is it that the most experienced hunters most generally refrain from attacking the grisly when they are alone, unless there be some tree near at hand into which they can climb for refuge; so rarely will the animal attempt to follow them amongst its limbs. Subsequently, however, I have heard of one case where a bear did follow an Indian. He had wounded it, and, being closely pursued by the enraged brute, climbed into the leafy safety, as he thought it, of one of the forest monarchs. He was, however, followed closely, and compelled to advance along one of the branches, until, still finding





the jaws of his vindictive enemy too near him, the Indian was forced to make a dangerous leap into a neighboring tree to save himself from his pertinacious pursuer.

"Consequently I had little reason to be astonished when I saw the huge grisly rushing towards me.

"Seizing my knife, I retreated, preparing to sell my life as dearly as I could,—for I scarcely hoped to escape,—when Lewis sprang between us.

"What followed occupied little more than a moment of time.

"Shouldering his rifle, and aiming it directly at its small but savagely furious eye, he delivered his fire.

"The bear dropped almost instantaneously. Its huge paws contracted with its dying agony. A last harsh and smothered growl issued from its frightful jaws, and the ferocious beast expired.

"As we found, on examination, the bullet from Lewis's rifle had passed through its eye directly into its brain, and had at once proved fatal.

"He had saved my life, and, seizing his hand, I pressed it affectionately to my heart.

"The whole of the preceding scene had passed in far less time than that which is occupied in here describing it. For as the Indian, who had paused, turned, and was preparing again to attack his formida-

ble foe, Lewis fired, and with the shot saved him the trouble of doing so.

“The Blackfoot stood before us, leaning upon his lance. His posture was both noble and dignified. At most but some twenty-five or thirty years of age, the eagle-plume which adorned his head, shaven of all but its scalp-lock, announced, as I afterwards learnt, that he was a warrior-chief of his tribe. From his shoulders fell a buffalo-robe, ornamented with wolves’ tails, which were so numerous as almost to fringe its sides. His moccasins were worked with beads, feathers, colored glass, and animals’ teeth; while a collar, from which hung the paw of a grisly bear, surrounded his neck, recalling, in all probability, some exploit in which he had been more fortunate than in this one, in which his life would have paid the forfeit, had it not been for our assistance.

“It was with a deep curiosity that I examined him. This was the first time that I had found myself in the presence of one of that race, whose manners are so widely different from our own, and of whom, even in Europe, I had seen and heard so much.”

CHAPTER VII.

THE JAGUAR. — HIS COMRADE.

“AFTER a few moments had elapsed, during which neither Lewis nor myself had spoken a word, the Blackfoot made a dignified gesture with his right arm, and, with a slow and stately accent, broke the silence.

“‘I am named the Jaguar. I was about to meet my death, and pass into the land of the spirits, when Waccondah’ - - I subsequently learnt that this is the name given by the Blackfeet to their principal deity — ‘sent my pale young brother to help me with the white hunter, whose inevitable ball killed the bear of the prairie. They have saved my life. Let them take it; for the scalps of the pale-face are hung at the door of my wigwam.’

“‘If my brother the Jaguar,’ replied Lewis, ‘has shed the blood of his pale brethren without being compelled to do so in his own defence, the Great

Spirit shall one day judge him. He will, in his turn, fall under the blow of the pale-face. To-day, his white brothers have saved his life, and they will not take it away. My brother is free. He may depart. But,' added Lewis, 'the Jaguar was not alone: a warrior was with him. Has he fled? Why did he not defend his brother? Why did he leave him exposed to the rage of the bear of the prairies?'

"'The white hunter is mistaken,' answered the Indian with a sad dignity. 'A Blackfoot does not fly. He knows how to leave the hunting-grounds of his countrymen.'

"Then, with a grave and melancholy gesture, he made a sign for us to follow him.

"About fifty steps from the spot on which we were then standing, we found the dead body of the companion of the Jaguar. It was frightfully torn and mutilated. The expression of the motionless face betrayed the mingled rage and terror of the Indian when he had found himself seized by the infuriated animal. It was here that the struggle had commenced, and that the bear, in its savage pursuit of the two Blackfeet, had overtaken them, and, before they had the opportunity to defend themselves, had torn with its enormous paws, the life from the young warrior whom we saw stretched upon the ground at our feet.

"As Lewis had suspected, it was at the first pile of

rock which we had passed around, that the grisly, hitherto concealed by the tall grass, amongst which it had been crouching, had seen the Indians, and had started to pursue them. Taken completely by surprise, they had immediately changed their cautious march for a rapid flight from the ferocious beast. Its speed, however (for, in spite of its large size, the grisly bear can run with great rapidity), rendered their flight unavailing. They had consequently turned upon the brute at this spot, where the companion of the Jaguar had met his doom.

“The three of us dug a grave with our knives. This was a work of some time, for it was dug deep in order that the dead might experience an uninterrupted repose.

“Then we laid the body of the Indian in his last home, with all his weapons, except his tomahawk, which his companion the Jaguar retained.

“After covering the grave with some large fragments and boulders of rock, and the trunk of a fallen tree which lay near, in order to protect the corpse of the Jaguar’s friend from the intrusive jaws of the wild beasts, which might be expected to disturb the grave, Lewis and myself retired on one side, leaving our newly made Indian friend alone.

“Although I had read that the Indian warrior but rarely exhibits any traces of strong sorrow in his bear

ing, let me own that I anticipated seeing something like regret or sorrow shown in the features of the Jaguar.

“It was not so.

“He stood for a few moments, at the side of the grave which contained the body of him who was so lately his companion, motionless, gazing upon it. He was apparently unmoved. His eyes were grave, still, and calm. His mouth was curved as it had before been, and did not in any way betray the feelings which must have been struggling in his breast. After the few moments had elapsed, he stooped, and, picking up a handful of the earth which had been disturbed by our knives, tossed it in an easterly direction, saying, as he did so, a few words in his own tongue. After doing this, he turned, and strode towards the spot to which I had retired in company with Lewis.

“‘My pale brother is young, but he has no fear. Let him take this tomahawk,’ he said, offering me the hatchet of the dead brave. ‘It shall be in his hands, as it had been in those of my red brother, the terror of his enemies. Let my white brothers know that the Jaguar is not forgetful. He will remember, and his ears shall ever be open. Let his pale brothers call for him when they will, and he shall come to them, although it may be from beyond the great river. The Jaguar has but one word to-day or to-morrow. He has spoken.’

“Ending with these words, he laid the *flat palm* of his right hand on my chest, over my heart, and then over that of Lewis, signifying, as the latter afterwards told me, that he pledged himself to become our brother. Then, bowing with an air of easy and graceful majesty, he turned from us, and slowly strode away.

“My eyes followed his lofty and finely proportioned figure, until it had passed across a rising ground, and had disappeared from our sight. Then I again turned to Lewis.”



CHAPTER VIII.

THE CACHE. — HORSE-HUNTING.

“WE were once more alone, but we now had in these immense solitudes a friend on whom we could count; for pledged faith is a sacred thing among these people whom we call savages, and who re-unite in themselves the fierce and sanguinary instincts of wild beasts, and the primitive virtues of the ancient shepherd races.

“I was happy in possessing a hatchet. Lewis had given me one of the long knives which he carried in his belt. My own rifle was an excellent one; but a tomahawk is a terrible weapon, whose value cannot be estimated save in the adventurous life of the Great West.

“Lewis, on his part, was not less content. The fur of the grisly bear was an object of value; for the trappers rarely attack this animal, because of the great danger. Consequently, his skin is more rarely found in market.

"It was necessary to dispose of our prey as quickly as possible; for the heat was great, and any long delay would injure the beauty of the fur. So we went to work at once, and, with the help of our knives, we separated the flesh and fat which adhered to the skin of the bear. A little stream, which was near the place, served us to wash away every vestige of flesh.

"We could not possibly carry this enormous spoil, and yet Lewis wished to get it to one of his caches, which was, he said, only twelve or fifteen miles distant.

"I must here explain what the inhabitants of these parts understand by a cache. They mean a hole dug in the ground with very great care, and covered over and concealed with every possible precaution. Yet the Indians often discover them by slight signs, which would escape any other than men accustomed to study Nature in its minutest details, and in its slightest changes. I shall soon have occasion to describe one of these caches, where the hunters of the prairie and the nomadic Indians bury all they do not take with them, arms, — powder, lead, furs, plumes, and others of their spoils which they may not desire to carry with them until their return to civilization.

"Lewis had remarked in the prairie the tracks of wild horses, and, presuming that a band of these animals could not be far off, wished to become master

of one of them in order that the skin of the bear might be easily transported to the cache of which he had spoken. We consequently made the necessary preparations to pursue one.

“Having carefully spread the skin on the ground, and secured it with large stones for the purpose of preserving its shape, we covered it with branches and brush, over which we rolled some trunks of trees blown down by the wind, or struck by lightning. With this precaution, we had no occasion to fear its destruction by wild beasts. We left the flesh of the bear to the vultures, who were already circling about our heads, and to the wolves, whose hoarse howling we could hear in the distant woods.

“After lighting a fire, we made an excellent meal off one of the paws roasted in the ashes; and then, taking our arms, we directed our steps towards the upper end of the prairie, keeping the wind against us, so as not to be discovered by the wild horses, who have an extremely keen scent.

“Reaching the top of a little woody hill, we saw, in the plain beyond, an immense troop of them quietly feeding on the thick grass.

“It was a magnificent sight. The superb animals formed the most varied groups; some playing together, apparently trying their speed, others immovable, with neck outstretched and ears thrown back,

expanded nostrils and wandering eyes, as they interrogated the thousand sounds or scents which might possibly disturb their sense of security.

"Here and there, mares, surrounded by their foals, watched them frisking and galloping about, when, suddenly trembling for their safety at the distant bark of a wolf, or the cry of the white eagle, they drove them before them, and hastened to regain the main troop.

"Three splendid animals were grazing quietly at some little distance from the rest, and on one of them Lewis had cast his eye as he prepared his lasso.

"The lasso, which is used by hunters to catch horses, antelopes, and other animals alive, consists of a leathern string, or strap, about twenty or twenty-five yards long, one end of which the hunter holds in his hand if on foot, or fastens to his saddle if on horseback. The other end has either a running knot, or is composed of two straps six or eight feet long, fastened to the main strap, and having at their extremity a ball or stone securely fixed.

"The lasso used by Lewis had two bullets instead of a running knot, which is not so sure.

"We skirted the plain, following the side of the woody hill where we had entered it, and hiding ourselves cautiously behind the bushes, which stretched down to that part of the level ground where were the

three horses. When about five hundred feet from them, Lewis told me not to move, to let him act, and to wait till he should call if he needed me. He then cut a number of branches, with which he made a sort of artificial bush, which shaded him completely, and prevented the horses from perceiving him. After this, holding before him in his left hand this movable bush, and in his right the lasso, which was loosely coiled over his right shoulder, bending down, he slowly and cautiously descended the hill towards the horses, still avoiding to move before the wind.

“Scarcely had he advanced fifty feet when the animals showed signs of inquietude. One of them especially, who was the nearest, pricked up his ears, looked around him, sniffed the air; and seeing nothing in the bushes, which appeared natural enough, he began to graze again. Lewis, who had stopped, recommenced his slow and measured step, almost seeming to creep on the ground.

“Whenever a horse raised his head, and turned in his direction, Lewis remained motionless, and waited patiently till the animal returned to his grazing. At last, the nearest horse was only thirty feet from him. Then throwing down his artificial bush, no longer needed, he threw the lasso with a powerful jerk round the legs of the horse, who made a bound to escape. However, before his feet touched the ground again, the balls of

the lasso, turning rapidly, were twisted around them and intertwined, and the poor beast fell over in the grass.

“At the movement of the hunter and the sound of the lasso, the two other horses started with lightning speed, and when I came, at the call of Lewis, they were out of sight in company with the rest of the troop. Almost in an instant, this plain, which had been covered with beautiful animals, had become a silent desert.

“The captive sought, with violent efforts, to free himself from the cords which bound him; but the efforts were useless, and served only to draw them still tighter. He tried to stand upon his feet, and rolled over from side to side, trying to seize one of us with his teeth.

“When I came up, Lewis made me hold the lasso, and, approaching adroitly, threw a piece of cloth over the head of the animal, which, deprived of sight, became more quiet. It was then easy to fasten his legs so that he could rise without being able to escape. And, in fact, he rose immediately, but stood still. His whole body trembled, and an abundant perspiration streaked his panting sides.

“Lewis, without uncovering his eyes, passed a cord around his mouth to prevent biting, and blew repeatedly in his nostrils; which he continued to do for nearly half an hour.

"The muscles of the animal gradually relaxed. Drooping his head, his knees bent; and finally he dropped upon the grass. He was vanquished.

"Lewis then uncovered his eyes. The poor beast looked at us with astonishment and fear, but did not attempt to escape; and, when Lewis made him rise, he suffered himself to be led to the nearest tree, where he was fastened by a cord long enough to allow him to graze. His legs, however, were still bound, so as to prevent any return to his former violence.

"We sat down at a little distance, and refreshed ourselves by eating something. We were both tired, Lewis especially, on account of the energetic resistance of our captive.

"Before starting on our return to the spot where we had left the bear-skin, Lewis breathed again in the nostrils of the horse, after having once more covered his eyes. He was now submissive enough, and, when they were uncovered again, was almost docile, and walked between us. We, however, each held the end of a cord, which was tied to him by way of precaution. Only we lengthened the cords on his legs in order that he might step easily.

"Approaching the rock where the bloody drama had occurred in which we had taken part, the air was darkened by the clouds of vultures which were feasting on the body of the bear, tearing from each other

the strips of flesh which they had disputed with a numerous body of wolves.

“There was an outrageous noise; but our approach restored order. A couple of gun-shots drove off the marauders, who, however, were quarrelling over well-picked bones; for they had lost no time, and nothing was left of the bear but the skeleton, to which adhered still a few shreds of half-torn flesh.

“We passed several days near this spot. It was necessary to finish the education of our horse, which was not easy; for he was of a more savage nature than prairie horses generally are. Once overcome, they are ordinarily easily accustomed to obedience, although quick to take again to their wild life on the first opportunity. Moreover, Lewis wished to profit by the occasion to increase the number of our furs, since the horse could easily transport them to the cache. So in the morning early, Lewis would set out in search of game, while I remained to keep watch over our horse, provisions, and skins.

“We were in a tolerably safe and comfortable spot, with a huge, overhanging rock behind us, surrounded by large trees and bushes. We could see the whole plain, and it would be almost impossible for man or beast to approach without being perceived. In case of attack, defence was easy: so Lewis did not hesitate to leave me, trusting to my prudence and courage, and

ready, moreover, to hasten, at the first report of my gun, to the rock.

“Lewis having secured as many furs as we could conveniently transport, one morning we made our preparations to depart. The skin of the bear was withdrawn from its place of concealment, and found in good condition. It was so heavy, that our united strength was necessary to put it on the back of the horse. To it Lewis added his other skins, and our provisions, and we set out for the spot where was the cache, in which we expected to find a fresh supply of ammunition.

“The journey was accomplished without accident, and the next day we reached the banks of a magnificent river, a branch of the Missouri, whose limpid waters rolled between two prairies covered with small groves of trees and most brilliantly varied flowers. Lewis stopped, looked around him, and went towards an enormous tree whose roots were extended into the water; then turning his back to the river, he counted three hundred paces into the prairie, and marked the spot with the branch of a tree. He then sought the bank of a ravine, whose bed was dry, and counted thence three hundred paces at right angles with his first path. On reaching the point of intersection, he struck the ground with the butt of his rifle, saying, ‘Here it is.’

"I had watched his proceeding without understanding it at all. So tying the horse to a tree, I ran to the spot where Lewis stood.

"‘This is the spot,’ said he, ‘and I believe my cache has not been disturbed.’

"I observed that he might be mistaken, that his paces might not have been equally measured, and that an error of some yards was quite possible. Without replying, he took me to a little distance, and, pointing out the place, —

"‘Don’t you see,’ said he, ‘that, for a square yard or so, the grass is greener and more evenly rich than elsewhere? This is not visible when we are close to it; but, at this distance, it might discover it to the practised eye of an Indian: this is because, the earth having been loosened and disturbed, the herbage over it has more opportunity to extend its roots, and find more abundant nourishment than in a compact soil. A more luxuriant vegetation is the inconvenient indication of a cache; but it can hardly be avoided. And now let us to work.’

"By the side of the ravine grew large quantities of reeds, and we cut enough to make, in a short time, half a dozen large, coarse mats, good enough, however, for the use intended.

"We laid them by the side of the spot where we were to dig; then, with our knives, we cut the sods in squares,

which we carefully removed, taking care not to disturb the earth on their roots. When the sods were removed, it was necessary to remove the earth below with our knives and hands, and place it on the mats which surrounded us.

"This was a long and fatiguing labor, and we were obliged to rest from time to time. At last, after two hours' hard work, I came to some branches which were covering packages and bundles carefully done up in coarse skins.

"This was Lewis's treasure.

"There were fine rifles, knives, hatchets, powder and ball, traps, and furs of all kinds. These had first been wrapped in woollen coverings, and afterwards in buffalo-hides.

"We enlarged the hole in order to accommodate our new riches, and after having taken some traps, ammunition, and a long Indian knife, which Lewis gave me, we replaced the rest carefully, adding the bear-skin, and the other furs.

"Then came the work of throwing in the earth again with our hands, and treading it down with our feet. When it was at length on a level with the soil, we replaced the sods as carefully as possible, and threw into the river the remaining earth, and the mats, which were no longer needed.

"I was enchanted with our work. We had raised

up again the plants, which were trodden down by our feet, and, at a little distance, the spot could not be distinguished from the rest of the prairie; and nothing, at least I thought so, could lead one to suspect it."



CHAPTER IX.

A TRIP ON THE WATER. — THE PURSUIT.

“WE were to continue our journey on foot, and, as we needed the horse no longer, Lewis set him free.

“The noble animal seemed astonished, at first, at finding himself free from any check; but he did not leave us at once. He remained near us, suffering us to caress him, and cropping the grass at our feet. Then he went off a few steps, made a few bounds, and stopped to look at us. All at once he threw back his ears, and raised his head; then, giving a loud neigh, he set off like an arrow towards the bottom of the valley, and in a few minutes was out of sight.

“His keen scent had doubtless revealed the whereabouts of some troop of horses.

“For a whole fortnight, our journey offered no incident worth mentioning.

“We travelled towards the north, setting our traps,

crossing rivers and water-courses, sometimes by fords, sometimes on rafts, which we constructed very readily from trunks of trees, bound together with reeds, and which we hid afterwards in the bushes, in case we might return on our steps.

“We had reached the territory of the Blackfeet, a savage tribe, then at war with the whites, and to which belonged the Indian whom we had saved from the claws of the grisly bear.

“Lewis trusted little, he said, to the promises of the Jaguar; for while admitting that he might remember the friendship which he had pledged to us, and the protection which he had promised to his rescuers (and this was probable, as the red-skins religiously keep their word), still he might not be a chief of sufficient influence to shield us from threatened danger. Moreover, the tribes are divided into sections, obedient to different chiefs, and we might fall into the hands of Indians who would sacrifice us, without regard to his promises or interposition on our behalf.

“Hence we advanced with very great prudence, keeping under cover of the woods, and building fires with only the very driest branches, in order to produce the least possible amount of smoke. This was only done to prepare our food.

“We had encamped on the shore of one of the branches of the Missouri, called Jefferson’s Fork, and

each evening we set our traps along the little stream which flowed into it. At sunrise we withdrew our traps, and passed the day in preparing the skins of our game. Lewis had designedly chosen this spot for remaining several days. He had a canoe hidden in the reeds, at a little distance, and, as the number of furs were too great for us to carry them any farther with us, it was necessary to dig a new cache, unless we found some means of transport for our booty.

“One morning, Lewis went to seek his canoe, leaving me in charge of the camp. Two hours afterwards, my ear, now accustomed to the sounds of the prairie and the forest, caught that of an oar, striking the water with precaution. I was creeping towards the river to reconnoitre, when I heard the cry of the martin, thrice repeated. This was the signal which we had agreed upon, and, in a few moments, Lewis showed himself.

“His canoe was built in the Indian fashion, with room for eight or ten persons, while two could easily manage it. Dug out of the trunk of a tree, it was very light, sat high in the water, and rose gracefully at the two extremities. A long pole thrown across the middle served as a balance-weight. We proceeded at once to remove our various articles into it, and then, hiding the canoe again in the reeds, waited for night before embarking.

“We were to go down Jefferson’s Fork to the Missouri, and up the branch where was Lewis’s cache, whence we would seek some settlement, and make our way to St. Louis.

“It was not without regret that I left these immense prairies, amidst which Providence had cast my present life, to undertake this long and dangerous voyage. A feeling of sadness possessed my heart; and I scarcely know what gloomy presentiment made me regret the life which I had led since my happy meeting with Lewis.

“I felt the same attachment to him as to a brother. His cool intrepidity in danger, the wisdom of his advice, his even disposition, his solicitude for my welfare, his great experience in our present life, his frankness, all conspired to render him agreeable to all who met him, and whom he himself might feel a liking for.

“But our voyage was to end in separation, perhaps forever. I did not let Lewis surmise the sentiments which filled my heart, and tried to drive away my gloomy forebodings, as I prepared for our departure.

“When night was come we embarked, and, taking the middle of the stream, we followed the current. The sky was serenely beautiful, and, although the moon was not above the horizon, we could easily distinguish the banks of the Fork. They were high and steep, and threw their shadows far into the river

Enormous trees grew on the rocky sides of it, and from their branches numerous parasites hung, even to the water's edge. Occasionally the shores approached each other quite closely, leaving but a narrow channel, which was entirely overshadowed by the overhanging foliage.

"Glow-worms and fire-flies glimmered with their phosphorescent light, in and above the grass, flashing here and there like will-o'-the-wisps.

"Far away we could hear the noise of the foxes and wolves, as well as an occasional jaguar. Nothing could be more charming than this calm and tranquil night, where our frail bark alone announced the presence of man.

"When day dawned, we drew up our canoe to the reedy shore, and, concealing it carefully, passed the day at the foot of a large tree, or under a large rock; for we were not to travel by day until we had passed beyond the limits of the territory of the Blackfeet.

"The third evening of our voyage was dark and cloudy. The bed of the river was scarcely visible, and, in narrow places, we found it difficult to keep the middle of the channel, avoiding the branches and vines, which might have overturned our canoe.

"We had been about two hours on our way, when Lewis told me to stop the paddle, and bent down to the surface of the water to listen.

“‘We are followed!’ said he. ‘Listen!’

“I did so, and heard distinctly the sound of oars in the water.

“This fact could but indicate danger, which must be avoided at any price; and we began to urge along our canoe as fast as possible.

“It sped along like an arrow, but, in spite of our efforts, the sound behind us grew louder and more distinct. We were evidently losing ground, and, in a short time, we must be overtaken by those who were in pursuit.

“At this moment we heard the most frightful yells. The Blackfeet (for it was they who pursued) had long heard us moving ahead of them, and perceiving by the speed we were making, as well as by the sound of our paddles, that we were on our guard, they did not hesitate to betray their presence.

“Their yells, resounding from shore to shore, were absolutely demoniacal. The birds, awakened by the clamor, flew about uttering sharp cries, and the wild beasts bounded away from the shores to their haunts.

“‘We are probably lost,’ said Lewis. ‘There is but one chance for safety, and I will try it. To attempt a struggle would be a folly, and could but retard our death for a short time.’

“A little in front of where we were, stretched out several feet over the water, was an enormous tree, half

overturned in some hurricane. To this Lewis guided the canoe. We slung our guns over our shoulder, and, as we passed under the tree, caught hold of its branches, and in a moment had concealed ourselves in its dense foliage.

“Lewis, with a blow of his foot, had sent the canoe into the current, and we saw it rapidly float away with every thing which we possessed, and which we had labored so hard to collect.

“In a very short time, four pirogues, each containing from fifteen to twenty Indians, passed before us.

“‘It is a respite,’ said Lewis; ‘but the danger is not over.’

“In fact, he had scarcely uttered the words, when we heard their cries of rage. They had found our canoe empty, and were vociferating loudly at the disappointment. After this, silence once more reigned complete.”

CHAPTER X.

THE FIGHT.—LOSS OF A FRIEND.—WILLIAM A PRISONER.

“OUR situation was critical; for to one who knew the habits of the red-skins, as Lewis did, it was certain that they had not renounced their pursuit of us, and that they would explore the neighborhood in such a manner as to prevent our eluding capture by them.

“For two days and two nights, we remained in the tree which had saved us. Our strength had been maintained by some slices of smoked beef, which Lewis had taken the precaution to put in his game-bag, and we descended a branch with great precaution to drink from the river. But our slender stock of provisions was now completely exhausted, and, come what might, we were obliged to leave our shelter.

“After examining our arms, and being satisfied that they were all right, we began to climb the rock where hung the tree which had been our protection. Reach-

ing the summit, we examined the country carefully and, seeing nothing to awaken suspicion, we set out.

“After something more than an hour’s walk, during which the most perfect silence was observed by us, we had reached a narrow piece of ground between the woods and the river, when, all of a sudden, some twenty Indians rose, with a yell of triumph, from the bushes, and dashed towards us.

“We were ready in a moment to receive them, and the first two who approached fell, struck by our bullets in the chest. At this sight, the rest were for a moment undecided ; and we profited by the delay to gain the bank of the river, at a sandy spot free from bushes. There, hatchet in hand, for immediate protection, we reloaded our pieces.

“But a short distance from us, there was a canoe, which Lewis told me, in English, to approach gradually, while he kept them at bay. I obeyed immediately ; but our project was suspected, and a warrior ran hastily to cut me off.

“There was no time to hesitate ; so I ran at him, and, before he could defend himself, a blow of my hatchet despatched him.

“To jump into the canoe, and cut the cord, was but a moment’s work. In another minute, Lewis jumped into the water, and was by my side. A shower of arrows fell about us ; but we thought only of flight.

“We had gained the current, when two canoes full of warriors left the other shore, and came straight towards us. The Indians who pursued us swam out, and, in a moment, we were surrounded on all sides.

“We fought bravely, but without hope; and, at last, I saw my poor Lewis, struck by an arrow, fall into the river, and disappear.

“I was seized with despair, which redoubled my strength. I could see nothing around me, and the resistance which my arm received alone indicated to me when I had struck an assailant.

“Worn out at last, overwhelmed by numbers, I fell in the bottom of the canoe, and the knives of the Indians flashed over me, when a warrior leaped into the boat, and, dashing aside the weapons, exclaimed, —

“‘Stop! the pale-face is brave and courageous. He has made the blood of our brethren flow. His death in the battle would be too sweet. He ought to be fastened to the stake.’

“Cries of joy welcomed these words. In an instant, I was bound, taken on the shoulders of a captor, and placed upon the shore.

“I was in deep grief, not at the tortures which were soon to try me, but at the loss of my good Lewis. I could only think of him.

“He had fallen while defending my life. It was partly for my sake that he had undertaken the trip,

and I reproached myself as being the cause of his death. I had seen him sink beneath the blows of ferocious enemies, and now understood better than ever before how dear he indeed was to me.

"I felt that man is not created to live alone, and that the instinct of sociability which God has placed in our soul is a law which we must perforce obey.

"The friendship of which Lewis had spoken was revealing itself in me, and I felt as if part of my very being was gone with the companion of my life.

"In order, however, that my weakness might not be interpreted as cowardice, I succeeded in overcoming my sorrow, and intimated to those who carried me, that, not being wounded, I wished to walk.

"They put me down, and a warrior came up to loosen the cords which bound my feet. As he bent over me, I seemed to hear a low voice whisper in my ear, '*Silence, hope!*' Raising my eyes, I saw the same Indian who had turned aside the weapons of death in the canoe. It was the Jaguar, whom Lewis and myself had saved from the bear. I kept quiet, exchanging a rapid glance with him, and we renewed our march.

"After two hours of fatiguing progress through the woods, we came to a clearing, in the midst of which was the camp of the Blackfeet.

"It was a summer village, composed of huts located





without any regard to symmetry. In the midst of it was a large open space, reserved for their assemblies.

“A stake was quickly arranged in the middle, and I was bound to it securely by thongs of buffalo-hide.

“They placed before me the bodies of the warriors slain by Lewis and myself, while two men sat by my side to prevent any attempt at escape.

“All the braves of the tribe entered one hut much larger than the others, where, evidently, a council was being held for the purpose of deciding my fate.

“Meanwhile, the wives and sisters of the dead warriors uttered most lamentable cries, and tore their hair, seeking vainly, as it were, to restore life to the bodies already stiffened and cold in death.

“They overwhelmed me with reproaches, threw sand and stones at me, and flew at me to tear me with their nails. Indeed, I should have perished by their hands, had it not been for my two guards.

“The council was not long. The Blackfeet came out, uttering loud yells, and one of the chiefs came to tell me, that, as I had been brave in combat, I was to die the death of the brave, — by fire.

“Immediately the women began to bring armfuls of sticks. These were dry, in order that the smoke might not be too thick, and suffocate me before I could feel the terrible fire. They placed them at a little distance from the stake, through a refinement of cruelty, the

my punishment might be longer, and my tortures the greater.

“I had committed my soul to God, and bidden adieu to all that I held dear on earth. My memory carried me back to the happy days of my childhood, and I was enabled to preserve a calm demeanor throughout these horrid preparations.

“I had injured no one, save to defend my threatened life. I had exposed my own existence to save that of my fellows. I had invariably followed the wise advice of my adopted father and the baron, and now, confiding in the divine mercy, I prepared to rejoin the worthy Berchtold and my good Lewis in the eternal heaven, whither they had preceded me.

“This calmness, which I drew from my belief and the purity of my conscience, was looked upon by the Indians as bravado, and an insult to their preparations.

“They overwhelmed me with the vilest reproaches and insults, hoping to arouse my anger; but, given up to my sweet memories and Christian hopes, my face was unmoved and impassible.

“Then commenced their dance of death.

“Each warrior, armed for the combat, made a thousand contortions to the sound of their almost infernal music, and sprang at me as if to end my agony at a blow. It was as if they had wagered as to who should show the greatest skill in hurling their tomahawk or

their darts at the stake in closest proximity to my head.

“The Jaguar was among the others, and made himself remarkable by his anger and rage when he approached me. Twice I thought he was about to cleave my head with a blow of his tomahawk; but he was restrained by those who accompanied him, and who did not wish to be deprived of the pleasure of assisting at my sufferings when the pile should at last be lit.”





CHAPTER XI.

THE GRATITUDE OF THE JAGUAR.—MY ESCAPE.

“DURING these preparations, the sky had gradually become covered with dense clouds, rolling over it from the horizon. Indeed, every thing denoted a speedy and violent storm. Nor was it long before it burst forth in all its savage strength. A heavy rain fell upon us, accompanied by vivid flashes of lightning, and almost continuous peals of thunder, which, in a very brief space of time, inundated the whole village. It was, therefore, by common consent, decided that my punishment was to be deferred; and the elders of the tribe appointed the dawn of the next day for it to take place upon. I was then, as they said, to go and rejoin my fathers, in the abode of the Great Spirit.

“It was the Jaguar who came to free me from the stake.

“After making me take some food, in the night of a

circle of Indians, who looked on in dead silence, he led me away to the eastern end of the village. Here he bound me to a large pine-tree, and as the storm had now mitigated its first violence, and the clouds were rapidly passing away, a fire was lighted before me, and four Blackfeet crouched by it, prepared to watch their prisoner through the night.

“The Jaguar had placed me with my face turned towards the fire. As he passed the thongs around my waist, and knotted them on my wrists, he said nothing. But as he passed behind the pine, to fasten them to its trunk, I heard him say, in an undertone which was scarcely a whisper, —

“‘Let not my pale brother speak, but let him listen, and pay attention to the voice of the owl when he hears it.’

“Without uttering another word, he turned, and disappeared among the huts of the village.

“Three hours passed away, which may safely be named as three of the longest hours I had ever known. At first, I had reflected upon the words of the Jaguar with something akin to hope; but, after a while, I relapsed into an apathetic indifference to my condition, as I reflected upon its hopelessness, and my thoughts reverted to the baron, to Stanislas, and to little Bertha. What, I thought, would be their feelings, did they know to what a doom the poor boy whom they had loved

and befriended was now exposed. I am not ashamed to say, that, as I thought of this, the big tears were running down my cheeks. Even while they were doing so, my reflections were almost insensibly turned to Berchtold and his teachings. I remembered that he had taught me always to depend upon Providence, and to place my faith in its sustaining power, and I uttered a brief but heartfelt prayer to it not to abandon me. As it then seemed to me, my heart grew stronger, and I could more firmly regard my terrible situation.

“The fire in front of me had now burned down to its embers. Only an occasional and brief flash showed that it was still alive. The Indians who had been watching me, and who had several times come to examine the thongs which bound me to the pine, were also sunken in slumber.

“My head had fallen upon my shoulder, and I was almost fallen into a sleep as deep as that which had seized upon my guards, when I heard the cry of the owl.

“Opening my eyes, I suddenly raised my head as quietly as possible. Every thing was hushed and quiet around me. The four Blackfeet were all sleeping. None of them had been aroused by the cry I had heard.

“It was not immediately repeated. Suspense actu-

ally parched my tongue until it clove to the roof of my mouth, and caused my heart to beat so violently that I actually heard it. For more than five minutes, I heard nothing save it, and the regular breathing of my guards. Then the cry was a second time repeated. This time, it was but at a short distance.

“Again I listened for it, and again I had to endure another period of this agonizing suspense.

“Suddenly, words were uttered in a whisper close to my ear; and, although I knew the voice of the Jaguar, such was the exteme and painful tension to which my faculties had been subjected, that I believe I must have cried out, had it not been for the warning which they contained.

“‘Let my white brother neither speak nor stir,’ he said, ‘until the Jaguar bids him.’

“About three minutes later, I felt a quick, sharp movement which severed the thongs of buffalo-hide that bound me to the pine.

“‘Let my pale brother pass behind the tree.’

“Slowly, and as noiselessly as possible, I did so, and was quickly on the other side. The Jaguar was standing there. With the keen edge of his tomahawk, he divided the thongs which were attached to my wrists, and, taking me by the hand, led me rapidly after him into the thickest of the woods.

“For nearly an hour, he walked on without uttering

a word. I followed him; for, after we had left the village behind us, he released my hand, in order that our movements might be more free and unencumbered. At length, we emerged from the trees upon an open space bordered by a ravine. Here he stopped and turned to me, and, in the shadows of the night, I could notice his gesture of dignity as he spoke to me.

“‘The Jaguar promised to remember. Has he done so?’

“I made a motion of acquiescence.

“‘His pale brother saved his life. To-day, in turn, the Jaguar rescues him from death. He would have saved the Prairie-hunter also; but it was too late. Blood had been shed. The Jaguar sought for his body, that the flesh of a brave man might not become the prey of the cayote and vulture; but he could not find it.’

“He also informed me that he had been the leader of the Blackfeet in two expeditions, which they had undertaken against the whites. Both of these had failed. Having thus lost, not only his command, but his influence with the tribe, he had, for this reason, employed a ruse to save me, instead of asking my life as an equivalent for the service I had done him.

“‘The pale-faces,’ he added, ‘marched into one of our villages while the warriors were at the chase.

They murdered our women, our children, and our old men. The Blackfeet have long memories. They do not forget. They have sworn that no pale-face who falls into their hands shall live. Let my brother depart as quickly as he can; for his red kinsman cannot save him twice.'

"Having said this, he gave me a tomahawk and a knife, which he had brought with him; then, pointing out the direction in which the river lay, he advised me to cross it by swimming, and to travel along its farther bank. After this, pressing my hand, he disappeared again upon his homeward path.

"Once more I stood alone, at night, in the midst of a dense forest. No road or settled path was marked through it, and I felt myself to be surrounded in it, not alone by savage beasts, but by still more savage and remorseless foes.

"My hopefulness and buoyancy of spirit, however, rarely desert me, where I have any chance given me to display either my own skill or my own endurance. Summoning all my courage, and confiding in that divine assistance, which, as yet, had never failed me, I turned my steps in the direction which had been pointed out to me by the Jaguar. Fatigued as I was with the exertions of the previous day, and the want of sleep this night, I nevertheless kept on, and, towards morning, found myself on the bank of a little stream

which was almost hidden by reeds and bushes. Forcing my way through them, heedless of possible danger, I flung myself down on my knees by it and drank eagerly; for I was almost perishing with thirst."

CHAPTER XII.

RECAPTURE. — THE RACE FOR LIFE.

"AFTER appeasing my thirst, I gazed on every side, for the dawn was just coloring the eastern horizon. Seeing no indications of danger (for I was not yet as keen-sighted and suspiciously alert as the Indians are), I jumped into the water, and swam across.

"Reaching its opposite bank in safety, I was on the point of uttering a fervent thanksgiving for my deliverance, as I was crossing the reedy ground which bordered it, when five or six warriors of the Blackfeet rushed upon me, and, before I could even make use of my tomahawk or knife, I was thrown down, deprived of them, bound, and rendered completely powerless.

"My flight had been discovered within an hour after my departure, and the Blackfeet had at once commenced pursuit.

"Divining that my course would be in the direction

of the river, a large party had hurried towards and crossed it, dispersing themselves along its bank to entrap me, while a smaller party were behind me carefully following my trail, which was easily to be detected on the damp ground. As this party of the Indians had the gloom of the night to contend with in tracking it, they had not overtaken me; and I fell into the ambuscade which their companions had prepared.

"I was brought back to the village, where my arrival was greeted with cries of joy.

"The chief of the tribe approached me on my entrance, and, having bid the Indians strip me of my clothing, gave orders to them to fasten me once more to the stake.

"‘The pale-faces, then, are cowards,’ said he with a tone of contempt, ‘because they fly from death. They can cut the throats of women and children, but punishment makes them afraid. They have the feet of a deer, the teeth of the wolf, but the heart of a squaw.’

"One warrior recommended that I should be given up to the women and children, who were eager, as he remarked, to take away the life of a timid and cowardly pale-face.

"This proposal was received with yells, and shrieks of delight, by the females and younger portion of the tribe.

"Then the Jaguar spoke.

“His eyes flashed with a savage scorn; and, but for the incidents of the past night, I should have believed him more thirsty for my blood than any of his brethren.

“‘Fire is the death of a brave. The white-face who flees from death would shrink with dread at the sight of the flames. Fear would deprive him of life long before he felt any pain. Since he knows how to run, and has swift feet, like an antelope, let my brothers conduct him to the prairie, north of the village. There we will hunt him, and slay him with our arrows. The tomahawk should be stained only with the blood of men, and this is a squaw,—a milky-faced squaw. When we shall have killed him, we can hang up his scalp at the council-wigwam, and point it out as that of a white man who was a coward.’

“This cruel proposition was instantly received with shouts of joy, and they ran at once to provide themselves with their arrows or their lances.

“The chief asked me if I knew how to run.

“I replied scornfully, that the whites knew how to run only towards their enemies, but that, if I had to die, it would matter but little how or in what manner.

“Now, it happened that amongst my comrades, as a lad, while in Europe, I had always been noted as a swift runner. Indeed, more than once, my fleetness of foot had been praised as something remarkable.

Of course, the Jaguar could not have divined this. His proposal had been made simply to give me a chance of safety, while fearing that it could not possibly prove effectual. Thus he endeavored to shield me with his protection as ably and as long as he by any means could.

“To let myself be slain, without attempting to save that life which had been given me by God, was certainly not an act of courage. Neither could my flight before so many armed enemies be justly considered an act of cowardice. As I reflected upon these considerations, my decision was speedily made not even yet to abandon all hope.

“I, therefore, asked the chief that I might have the permission given me to wear my moccasins.

“‘The pale-face wishes,’ said the Jaguar with a sneer, ‘to go to the hunting-grounds of the dead without a scratch upon his feet. We will let him do so.’

“They then led me to an immense prairie, which extended parallel with the forest as far as the river where I had been recaptured, and gave me a start of about one thousand feet in advance of them. This was the only chance given me.

“No time for reflection was, however, left me. I had to run for my life; and, as I dashed out at my full speed, a savage yell arose on the air, and announced to me that the Blackfeet had commenced their cruel hunt.

"It was with a rapidity like that of the chamois, that I flew over the ground. I was astonished at my own light-footedness. My moccasins seemed fledged with the wind. My feet scarcely seemed to touch the ground. There were, however, several miles of prairie to be passed before I might hope to reach the river; and although for the moment the excitement had subdued my fatigue, and lent my muscles fresh vigor, I could not help questioning myself as to the possibility of my holding out until I should reach the stream. Besides, fleetly as I might be able to run, was it not probable that some one of the younger Blackfeet might have as nimble feet as mine?

"As this occurred to me, an arrow whistled through the air close to my ears, and I knew that this last idea must be correct. Several other arrows followed the first.

"Putting out my fiercest energy, I dashed on in spite of the underbrush, and long, sharp reeds of the prairie, which cut and tore my legs, causing them to bleed copiously.

"I had already crossed more than half of the plain, without daring to turn my head, because I was afraid any such movement might make me lose ground, when it seemed to me that the sound of the Indians in pursuit was gradually growing fainter and less distinct.

"Venturing, for a moment, to turn my head, I saw

that the great mass of the pursuing warriors was now quite distant. Several of their most speedy runners were, however, much in the advance, and by far too close upon my heels. One warrior, indeed, more alert than the rest, was scarcely more than three hundred feet from me. He was armed with a long lance.

“Filled with fresh hopes of escape, in spite of my gradually overmastering fatigue, I redoubled my efforts. So long a race was, however, in my present condition, too much for me. A mist came across my eyes, my temples throbbed violently, and my knees quivered under me. Blood flowed both from my mouth and nose, and I felt it dropping heavily upon my chest.

“I was still three-quarters of a mile or more from the river, whose cool and green water I saw stretching before me. Another look thrown back showed me that my foremost pursuer’s strength had not been failing so rapidly as mine. He was now scarcely more than eighty feet behind me, and was already making his preparations to transfix me with his lance. Worn out with fatigue, and overcome by passion, I stopped short. In my despair, I determined to precipitate myself upon him, selling my life, at any rate, as dearly as I could. This I accordingly did. The Indian, who was astonished at this sudden movement upon my part, endeavored, although fruitlessly, to stop his headlong career,



and to transfix my body with his weapon. This was in vain, for I swerved aside as the lance was levelled at me; and, in making the effort, he stumbled and fell. In doing so, his spear struck in the earth; and, with the force of his fall, its handle broke off in his hand. As quick as lightning, I tore the broken shaft of the lance from the earth, and pinned the Indian to the earth, even as he was struggling to rise. His dark eyes were lifted to mine with a terrible stare of mingled rage and agony. I could not, however, remain to see him die, but continued my desperate course.

“The rest of my pursuers had been witnesses of this brief struggle, and hurried to the assistance of their companion. They had been too far behind to succor him, and, when they came up to his body, they must have found it lifeless.

“Stopping, they uttered wild cries and shouts of rage. Meanwhile, profiting by the delay, I had gained the skirts of a thin cotton-grove, which skirted the stream, and, at once, dashed myself into the current. I was now almost worn out by the exertion I had been making, and was unable to breast its strength. Consequently, I was borne by it towards a neighboring island, lower down the stream, at the upper end of which a great quantity of drift-wood had collected. This had formed an immense and solid raft, on portions of which the logs, by the action of the river, had

been raised, and piled one upon the other. Beneath this raft, having, by my immersion, regained a portion of my strength, I plunged, and swam until I was fortunate enough to find an opening between some of the rent and floating trees. Here I could raise my head, and breathe for a moment.

“The branches and drifted logs, which had been thrown by the action of the water above the surface, formed a shelter around and partially over me, which rose several feet above the level of the stream.

“All danger was not, however, yet past.

“Scarcely had I sufficient time to collect my senses, when I heard my enemies upon the bank of the river, shrieking and yelling like a parcel of demons. Then, jumping into the flood, they swam towards the upper portion of the island, against which the drift-wood was collected beneath which I lay concealed. When, through the interstices of the broken branches, I saw them pass and repass in every direction, my heart literally sank within me.

“After more than two hours, which seemed to me an age in length, from the fear which oppressed me, they at last gave up the search, and gradually quitted the island; or, at any rate, I did not hear their movements around and above me. Then a horrible idea suggested itself to me. Supposing they were to set fire to the wood. It was true that the portions of it

which were immersed would not burn. Enough, however, had been long enough exposed to the air; and this would burn rapidly. This apprehension haunted me until nightfall, when I ventured to quit my hiding-place, and swam, or rather suffered myself to be carried, down the current for a considerable distance.

“No sound of pursuit was heard by me, and I made towards the land on the opposite bank of the stream.

“When I emerged from the water, in spite of the numbness and cold with which I was suffering from my continuous immersion for more than six hours, as well as my bodily fatigue and hunger (in twenty-four hours I had tasted nothing), I walked on through the whole night, in order that I might put as great a space as possible between myself and my blood-thirsty enemies.”



CHAPTER XIII.

THE CANOE. — THE RAPID. — THE DRESS.

“THE imminence of the danger from which I had just escaped made me forget that which I ran in travelling unarmed in the midst of this wild country, at the risk of perishing from the teeth of the wolf, or the claws of the panther.

“Day at last appeared, and I approached the river-bank to drink, and refresh my strength by a bath. As I entered the water, I perceived a small bark-canoe drawn up, half out of the water.

“I had soon loosed it, and saw with pleasure that it was in good condition, and that it could serve for my voyage. After pulling up some roots and berries, I stepped into my frail bark, which I guided with a green branch, which I had torn from the nearest tree, and stripped of its smaller twigs and leaves.

“The current was not swift, and when night arrived

I had not made any great headway: so I resolved to continue my voyage all night; for I wanted, by all means, to leave a spot where I had lost my dear friend, and where I had almost perished by a cruel death.

“The river soon grew broader; and, as I advanced, the current became swifter. Far in the distance ahead, I heard a noise similar to that produced by a waterfall, and could not well account for it.

“I found it difficult to preserve my canoe in the current, and at each moment the rapidity became greater.

“The sharp rocks on either side seemed to glide apart like immense phantoms, while, against the background of the broad sky, the trees which surmounted them hung out their long branches over the stream.

“The noise which was previously heard now grew louder, and I could at length account for it. I was on a rapid! At some distance before me was the yawning gulf into which I was about to plunge with the waters of the river.

“What was its depth? did the river rush down over rocks, or into a deep bed?—such were the questions I asked myself in this new peril.

“I had hardly taken my resolution, when I was borne along with the rapidity of an arrow. I had reached the plunge, and, as my canoe quivered upon its very edge, I leaped into the air.

“What passed during several minutes it is impossible for me to remember; but, when I was able to realize my position, I was at the bottom of the water, and was carried along by it with a fearful velocity. I made an effort, striking out with my arms and legs, and soon felt the pure air of the night filling my lungs. I was saved, and, by the blessing of God, had received neither wound nor contusion.

“Swimming to the shore, I sat down on the grass to collect my strength and courage; for so many successive trials had at length broken me down, and destroyed a great portion of my energy and self-reliance.

“When I was somewhat recovered, I climbed a tree, and, fastening myself to several limbs with a vine, I fell asleep. It was dark when I awoke, yet I was ready to continue my painful journey.

“I was far enough distant not to be disturbed by the fear of the Blackfeet; but I had another subject for inquietude. I did not know the direction which would lead me to the white settlements; and I feared constantly lest chance might throw me into the power of some tribe as barbarous, perhaps, as that from which my escape had so recently been made.

“I was dying of hunger; and, although game was abundant enough, I had no means of procuring the subsistence which I needed; so I was forced to tear

up some roots with which to sustain my weakened powers.

“During the day, my body was exposed to the burning heat of the sun; and at night I was nearly frozen.

“Notwithstanding my sufferings, I put my confidence in Heaven, and courageously traversed immense prairies, without any shade, and filled with thorns and bushes which tore my legs, and re-opened the wounds which had been caused by my late race for life.

“For four days I kept on, and, at the end of that time, found myself near the remains of a fire which had been lighted but a few days before. The bones, and strips of buffalo-meat, which covered the ground led me to believe that hunters had been here. But, alas! they were gone now.

“I threw myself despondingly on a heap of dried grass, which had probably served them for a bed. In spite of my deep grief, Nature was more powerful than my severe sufferings, and I fell into a deep slumber.

“The bright rays of the morning sun awoke me, and at first it was difficult for me to recall my ideas; but the bitter truth soon revealed itself. I was naked, wounded, alone, abandoned in an unknown land, and, wherever I turned, could see only an immense solitude,

beyond which, doubtless, lived people more cruel than wild beasts.

“Under the weight of these sad reflections, I was drooping my head, when my eyes were suddenly struck by something bright, which lay glittering in the long grass, at no great distance.

“Approaching to look, — oh, unexpected happiness! — I saw a knife! Those who have passed their lives in the vicinity of cities, may not, perhaps, comprehend my joy at this discovery; but he who has passed part of his existence in the vast solitudes of America will understand it easily; for he may remember, that, in the course of his backwoods life, the possession of a knife is not a mere comfort, but a primary necessity.

“Animated with fresh hope, I examined the spot where I was attentively. Not far off I found the remains of a bison, and hastened to cut off a piece for my breakfast; but the meat had been spoiled by the excessive heat of the sun of the previous day; and, in spite of my great hunger, I could not eat a mouthful. I was therefore obliged to content myself with some roots, which seemed succulent to me, although they were very insipid.

“On reflection, I bethought me, that, if the flesh could be of no use, still the skin might furnish material for a covering; so I went to work at once. This was not difficult for me, as I had often helped

Lewis prepare his furs, and had acquired considerable skill.

“The flesh, which had commenced to putrefy, was easily detached from the skin, and using my knife, and some large flat stones which I found in the bed of a neighboring brook, I had soon cleaned the skin as much as possible. I had to rest from time to time; for I was feeble: and I found considerable difficulty in dragging the skin as far as the water’s edge, where I washed it free from all remains of flesh. I then cut some reeds, with which I pinned it to the earth to dry in the sun without shrinking.

“Night surprised me in the midst of my work, and obliged me to leave it unfinished until the morrow.

“In the tree among the branches of which I had determined to pass the night, I saw some birds’ nests, and, climbing up with some difficulty to the place where they were, I found about a dozen freshly laid eggs, which made me a most delicious meal. I descended to drink at the stream, and, on re-ascending, carried a good bundle of dry grass, which I spread over two of the limbs of the tree, as a bed, on which I slept soundly, after recommending myself to Him who had watched over me so carefully.

“The next morning I awoke stiff with cold, and had to give myself a good rubbing before my joints became supple enough to allow me to descend. I bathed in

the stream; and the rays of the morning sun partially restored my exhausted vigor.

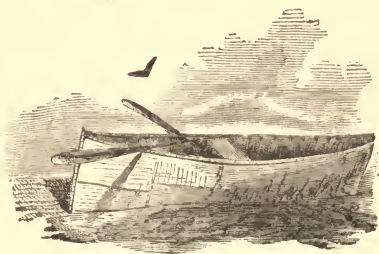
“I set to work with determination. The skin was a little damp yet with dew; but the sun and the wind soon dried it without rendering it less pliant.

“First, I busied myself with making a pair of mocasons to replace my old ones, which were about worn out, leaving my feet very much exposed; and, after a few trials, I finished by producing a pair capable of protecting me during a tolerably long journey.

“Out of the rest of the skin, I cut a kind of blouse, having three openings,—one for my head, and two for my arms.

“To sew the pieces together was the difficulty; and it must be owned, that it was a long time before I could supply the want of all that I needed. At last I found, on a rocky patch of ground, near a ravine, some *agave*, a plant resembling the aloes, whose leaves are covered with thorns. I drew out the long fibres from the stem, and used them as thread, while, for needles, I had the long and sharp thorns of the *acacia triacanthos*, which grew near by in large quantities. I perforated the large end with my knife, and now nothing was wanting but patience; consequently, I very soon had my garment finished. Not even the cap, which I made out of the skin of the bison's skull, was forgotten; and I fastened it with two of the stoutest fibres.

“Thus equipped, I presented the most grotesque appearance imaginable: and, looking at myself in one of the deeper portions of the stream, I could not help laughing outright; for my light-heartedness and hopes had returned as soon as I had recourse to those two powerful auxiliaries of man, — *labor and prayer.*”



CHAPTER XIV.

THE VALLEY.—THE BEAVERS.

“I DETERMINED to try and make a bow and arrows; for everywhere about me game abounded, and birds flew in countless numbers, without my being able to procure any nourishment but roots and flavorless fruits. After many efforts, I succeeded in making a bow out of a stout reed branch, cut from a young ash. The cord was soon found among the tendons of the bison, and arrows in plenty among the reeds, which I pointed with acacia-thorns, fastened on with fibres. To guide them straight, I attached to the other end, feathers from birds, which drop them continually, as they pass and repass from branch to branch.

“My satisfaction was great on finding myself in possession of a weapon which would not only allow me to provide for my subsistence, but which might serve to defend me, in case I met with hostile In-

dians again, which I was, as I must confess, by no means desirous of doing.

“To practise with my new arm was the first thing, nor did I prove very unskilful. The second arrow which I shot from my bow pierced a water-fowl, as it rose from the stream.

“After securing it, by a short swim, to pluck it and clean it was a quickly finished job; and, for the first time since my separation from poor Lewis, I ventured to make a fire to roast my game.

“Although the nights were sensibly cold, I had naturally hesitated to light a fire, because the smoke and flame would be visible from a distance. However, I now felt less fear, or partially re-assured by the space which I had placed between my enemies and myself; consequently, I dared the risk.

“I soon found a flint almost as clear as agate, and, with my knife and a heap of dry leaves, I soon had a clear flame, which I kept burning with constant additions of dry underbrush. Hanging the fowl, by some fibres of the agave, to the branch of a tree, I soon saw my coming dinner nicely browning, as it turned in the wind before my improvised kitchen-hearth.

“The repast was delicious, and, after some hours of repose, I felt quite disposed to push on. I was too near the river; and I hoped, by keeping a little to the

north, to meet some trappers, who would give me directions how to reach St. Louis.

“Therefore I prepared for my journey.

“My equipment was a little singular; and I thought of the astonishment of the baron and Stanislas, and the gay laugh of the charming little Bertha, if they could only see me in such a rig.

“Besides my moccasins, and my bison-skin blouse, which looked about as graceful as a blacksmith’s apron, I had fashioned out a kind of mantle, which came down to my knees, and which might serve, as occasion required, either as a quilt or as a garment.

“On my back I slung an extra pair of moccasins, which I had made, and a quiver, formed of two pieces of bark tied together, which held my arrows. My knife was fastened at my waist. In my right hand I carried a stout stick, with a large knot on the end, which would prove a very fair weapon for defense. Over my left shoulder I had passed my bow.

“Thus equipped, I set out gayly, and continued to advance for five days, without meeting any adventure worth repeating.

“Towards evening, on the fifth day, I reached a delicious valley. It was divided into two parts by a clear and limpid stream of water, bordered with beautiful flowers, and emptying itself into a deep ravine, which bounded the valley on one side. Towards the north,

it was completely shut in by a dense forest, which the underbrush and vines rendered absolutely impassable.

"The only passage was that by which I entered. It was only a few yards wide, and was flanked on either side by sharp rocks, covered with a dense growth of *euphorbia* and *agaves*, impenetrable even to wild beasts.

"Now that the dangers which I had run were far distant, I became thoughtless of what new perils might await me, and acquired a new taste for this life, so full of adventure and unforeseen events.

"Before the works of God in powerful and varied nature, man feels two successive sentiments, diametrically opposed, but both equally proceeding from the grandeur and perfections of the Creator of all things.

"Man is forced to bow, and acknowledge his littleness, when he considers the prodigies of creation about him; but he raises his head with honest pride, remembering, that, of all created beings on earth, he is the most intelligent, the most gifted, and the one whose perfectible nature must overcome and rule every other being whose instincts and feelings are in every manner inferior and more restrained.

"Thus I, a child almost, alone, abandoned, without friends or resources, in the midst of immense wastes, had been able, armed only with that confidence in God which is but a knowledge and a conviction of his

greatness and almighty power,—I had been able, I say, to protect my life, and continue, with some feeling of security, the long and painful journey which I had yet to accomplish.

“On entering this charming valley, of which I have spoken, and which seemed thrown in my way as if to invite a long sojourn, I thanked God for all his previous mercies, and established my camp near the stream, at the foot of an enormous tree, which extended afar its protecting shade.

“On reflection, I determined to remain here some time, and to explore the neighborhood, both to satisfy my taste for natural history, and to discover the traces of any trappers.

“The following morning, after a substantial breakfast, composed of a gray squirrel and a species of plover, some potatoes roasted in the ashes, and a drink of the fresh running brook, I started out of the little valley. I soon met with the stream again, and followed it up during nearly an hour.

“Arriving at a place where the river was wider, to my astonishment, I found a sort of coffer-dam, composed of trunks of trees, and branches interwoven and filled in with earth, which held the water in check. A sound which I heard in the water made me quite apprehensive, and I hid in the bushes.

“A few minutes after, I saw two or three black

bodies appear on the surface, remain still, and then come out of the water, and climb up the dam. I had read of and seen engravings of them. They were beavers.

"The wind blew towards me; so I approached, still concealed behind the thick curtain of leaves, to observe these interesting animals.

"A dozen beavers were upon the dam, very busy, apparently; and I soon saw what they were about. One side of the dam had been thrown down, probably by some overturned trunk floating down the stream, and the whole colony were about to repair the damage.

"One of them gnawed the base of a young tree, which stood near by, to make it fall into the river; which soon happened.

"Immediately, each one set to work cutting off the useless branches, or those which would be in the way, and depositing them carefully where they were wanted in the repairs.

"When the trunk was placed in position, by their joint efforts, across the hole made by the accident, the beavers went in quest of rich earth, which they made into little balls with their front paws,—which really seemed to resemble human hands,—and bringing them, supported by these and their nose, they bound together the branches which were filled in with this

mortar, using their back feet, which are webbed like those of aquatic birds, for this purpose; and, before a great while, the damage was all repaired, and the water had found its old level.

“In the midst of the pool formed by the dam, were their habitations. They were built in the shape of an oven, rounded off on the top, and built upon piles.

“I have since had occasion to see them quite near, and to examine them in detail.

“There are two entrances,—one above, the other beneath the water. The interior is divided into two or three stories, communicating with each other, and serving as dwelling and storehouse. In the upper part, the female rears her little ones on a soft and warm bed, made of moss and dried leaves.

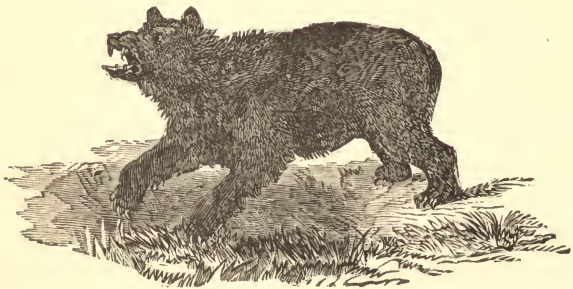
“The beaver eats only vegetable substances, such as dried fruits, the bark of trees, and roots.

“I once saw a beaver village abandoned, because of the drying-up of the water-course where it was built; and I admired greatly the ability and intelligence which had presided at its construction. The piles which supported their cabins were more than nine feet long, and were firmly buried in the earth. They were bound together by interwoven branches and posts, cemented with mortar composed of sand, loam, and small pebbles. Some of the trunks of the trees of which the dam was composed were as large round as the body of a

man, while others were perfectly square. The whole dam, which was perpendicular where it faced down stream, was sloping against its course, so as to offer a firm resistance to the pressure of the water, — a pressure which grew less and less on approaching the surface, just in proportion as the dam diminished.

“The upper slope was increased also by the gradual deposit of sand and mud from the river washings.

“But I examined that village some time afterwards. Now, after satisfying my curiosity, and passing several hours in observation, I continued my excursion, and returned to my camping-ground, well satisfied with what I had seen.”



CHAPTER XV.

THE BUFFALOES. — THE ARICARA.

“**AFTER** having recruited my strength, I recommenced my journey northward, feeling well able to endure the fatigue and difficulties I might experience. I had so accustomed myself to the use of the bow, and employed it now so skilfully, that I did not fear to meet an Indian, or any other enemy. So I went on my way full of confidence.

“I followed the course of a large stream, which I had discovered in the neighborhood, both because it was in the direction which I intended to pursue, and because of the rare beauties of the tract of land through which it flowed.

“The prairies along the banks were adorned with innumerable flowers, displaying as many varieties of brilliant color as of graceful form. The charming isles, which appeared to float upon the surface of the

stream, and where I several times sought rest, were like beautiful gardens. The trees were frequently overrun with parasites, and vines in blossom, which filled the air with delicious perfume.

“Amid this immense growth of verdure were occasional prairies and clearings, covered with rank grass, and serving as a retreat for the buffalo, the moose, and the antelope, which had traced innumerable paths among the trees and bushes, forming a very labyrinth in complication and variety.

“In some spots, vegetation seemed to have ceased, and the soil remained barren and arid. This effect is produced by the exposure of large veins of oxide of iron, from the action of water.

“At a bend in the river, a large, rocky hill, formed almost entirely of this mineral, had long offered an obstacle to the passage of the waters; but, overcome by the incessant rush of the stream, it had finally been pierced, and now the waters rushed through an immense arch, whose sides are being weakened day by day, until, with lapse of years, the whole will be wasted away, and fall into the wave beneath.

“After passing this point, the land rose gradually on either bank, still showing rich deposits of mineral matter, whose presence indicated to my mind, as I recollected the descriptions given by Lewis, that I was on a branch of the Missouri. Consequently, feeling

that I was in the right way to reach the terminus of my journey, I continued to follow the shore, examining with curiosity the many wonders of this remarkably rich country.

“I thought of this well-nigh exhaustless store of a metal most useful to civilized man, thus placed by Nature in a rich and fertile country, amid immense beds of the coal formation, which compose the valleys bordering on the Missouri.

“Is not this a certain sign of the future wealth of these immense regions in the West, which need only the labor and the intelligence of man, to be drawn from their wild state, now rich in poetry and natural beauties, but poor in all products useful to humanity, and, with their fertile wealth, and countless resources, totally unprofitable to civilization.

“I frequently stopped to examine, collecting many specimens of grains and minerals that I wished to preserve, which I placed in a little bark box, which I had made, and which was attached to my waist.

“In addition to these mineral deposits, the land is wholly composed of prairies, intersected by ravines, and gently rolling hills. During the rainy season, all the fissures and indentations of the soil become the beds of rapid torrents, swollen by the waters from the regions beyond; but in mid-summer these are all dried up.

“On the slopes of the hills, and in these ravines, is found a plentiful growth of brush; but the rest of the country, as one approaches the high mountains which bound the horizon, is covered with tall, thick grass. Nor does it contain a solitary tree, beneath which the traveller may find shelter from the burning rays of the sun.

“The ground of this higher region is strongly impregnated with sulphur, sulphate of iron, alum, and sulphate of soda. These various substances color the neighboring streams, and, aided by the frequent overflowings which occur in the valley of the Mississippi, give the waters of this river their taste as well as color.

“While following the river-bank, I heard some distance before me, in a plain from which I was separated by a thick grove of trees, a frightful noise, which seemed to approach rapidly. The very earth seemed to be tremulous with a violent and precipitate motion.

“I had just time to seek shelter behind a huge boulder, and examine my weapons, when, bursting and crashing through the bushes and trees, overturning and trampling all that opposed them, came a troop of nearly two hundred buffaloes.

“They passed like a hurricane towards the river, brushing the long grass beneath their rapid course

spurning the stones with their mighty hoofs, and making the most frightful bellowings.

“The whole troop dashed recklessly into the rapid stream, displacing its waters with their impetuous rush, and throwing them violently back upon the bank. They then climbed the opposite bank, and, pursuing their headlong course, were in a short time lost to my sight.

“Certainly, nothing but a powerful enemy could have caused such a panic. As I was anxiously waiting for the enemy to appear, I fancied that I heard the sound of a human voice, in a short exclamation, from beyond the trees through which the rush of the buffaloes had just passed. It had scarcely caught my ear, as it was mingled with the furious bellowing of a brute. Leaving my momentary shelter, I quickly hurried forward, although with as much caution as my impatience would permit, through the dense grove which obstructed my view. On the other side of it, I beheld a scene which at once explained itself.

“Scarcely a hundred feet from me, a large buffalo-cow was shielding with her body a young calf, whose feet had been caught by a lasso, and which was now lying upon the ground, completely motionless. After a brief pause, with a savage bellow, as if possessed with a mad fury, she rushed upon an Indian, armed with a lance, who was intent upon his anticipated prey. Otherwise,

so acute is the Indian sense of hearing, that I feel convinced he would have heard my approach.

“Unfortunately he made a false step, and, before he could recover himself, the infuriated animal was upon him. Raising him upon her horns, as I might have picked up a dead sparrow, she tossed him forward into the air, through which he described an arc of about fifteen or perhaps twenty feet. Then, rushing in her blind rage upon the prostrate foe, her head was again bent to the ground, and, with her threatening horns, she needed scarcely an instant more to accomplish her revenge by trampling him beneath her feet.

“Let me own honestly, that when I first saw him fall, and the buffalo rush upon him, a cruel delight for a moment took possession of me.

“I had not yet forgotten my race for dear life from the Blackfeet, and this feeling was not altogether unnatural.

“Then, however, I recalled the fact that I really owed my life to the Jaguar; and when I saw him raised like a feather on the horns of the brute, and in a moment after whirling through the air, a more Christian feeling filled my heart. I knew not to what tribe he might belong. He might not be one of the Blackfeet. Nay, if he were, he was none the less my brother. Moreover, I had been alone for several days; and, in my state of perfect isolation, I confess I had repeatedly

wished again to hear the voice of a fellow-being. Consequently, I rushed as quickly forward as I could, and unsheathed my knife as I did so.

“The unfortunate hunter was lying on the ground, an inert and perhaps lifeless mass at the feet of his formidable and maddened foe.

“Just in time to prevent the second deadly attack, I uttered a loud yell behind the infuriated animal, which caused her to stop for a moment in temporary indecision. Short as was this moment, it was enough to save the Indian. Springing forward, with a sudden and dexterous blow with my knife I succeeded in hamstringing her. The buffalo, bellowing fiercely with pain and anger, reeled and fell over. Then she again tried to rise, tossing her huge head wildly in the furious effort; but she again fell prone upon the earth.

“Profiting by this moment to end her sufferings, as the buffalo lay motionless before me, I dealt her a sharp blow between the base of the skull and its junction with the spine. It was given vigorously and effectively. Making one last effort to rise, she rolled over upon the ground, and, save a quiver or two through her huge form, stirred no more.

“This took less time to accomplish than it now does to relate. Turning at once to the Indian, who seemed to be in a pitiable state, I saw that he had fainted away from loss of blood. A large, but fortunately not

a deep wound, which had entered no vital part, as I discovered by examination, was on his right side. It had been given by the horn of the buffalo. As I saw the abundant flow of blood, it became evident to me that it was at once necessary to stop it.

"While with my good Lewis, I had frequently had occasion to see him make use of plants to stop bleeding from light and casual wounds, and had gradually become a tolerably fair adept in the rough surgery of the prairie. I had never, however, attended to so deep a wound as this. Nevertheless, I looked about me, and discovered, after a brief search, a sufficiency of marjoram-leaves for my present purpose. Chewing these until they were reduced to a pulpy mass, I converted them into a species of poultice. This I placed upon the wound, and soon had the pleasure of seeing that the flow of blood had gradually ceased.

"I then hastened to fetch some water from the river, in a little gourd, which I had fashioned from a calabash.

"The fresh water, which I sprinkled freely over his brow and face, revived the wounded Indian. With a faint and almost inarticulate murmur upon his lips, he opened his eyes.

"As soon as he perceived me, his first movement was with his hand, as if searching for his tomahawk for the purpose of defence; but the effort was beyond

his strength, and, as a necessary result of the exertion, he sank back once more perfectly unconscious.

“Thanks to my care, and the mercy of Providence, he soon recovered. When he did so, he looked upon me more calmly and even amiably. I pressed upon his lips the juice of some wild fruit which I had gathered; and, after a brief space of time, a slight tinge of color appeared upon his lips, and he was enabled to sit up, with his back supported against a tree. He would have spoken to me; but I put my finger to my lip, and, with a meaning gesture, signified to him that he must remain silent. His dark eye expressed astonishment; but, recovering the impassibility which distinguish his race, he closed his eyes, and, overcome by fatigue and loss of blood, sank upon the ground, and slept quietly.

“Taking the opportunity which his slumber gave me, I freed the buffalo-calf, whose cries were so pitiable as to be annoying. Entangled in the cords of the lasso, from which it found it impossible to release itself, it would, unless it had been released, have died very speedily of hunger, or have been devoured by the vultures and prairie-wolves, of which there is never any scarcity upon these broad plains. Young as it was, it was strong enough, and had sufficient instinct, to regain its troop. In fact, as soon as it was released,

I watched it disappear in the direction that the herd to which it belonged had previously taken.

“After having killed several birds, and plucked them, I cut off a slice of meat from the dead buffalo, and, while my new comrade slept, prepared our meal, still watching the fine and noble features of the wounded man attentively.



CHAPTER XVI.

ARRIVAL IN THE TRIBE. — ADOPTION.

“HE was evidently a strong and vigorous man, perhaps a little over twenty-five years of age, and expressing in his countenance both courage and frankness. His dress, torn, and stained with blood, was richly decorated with feathers and pearls. The teeth and claws of a grisly bear, of which his necklace was formed, indicated a skilful hunter. The tails of wolves, which adorned his head-dress and fell below his shoulders, as well as the ornaments on his right arm, marked the intrepid warrior; while the eagle-plumes that waved proudly over his forehead revealed his dignity as a chief.

“He was not a Blackfoot, — I had studied them too closely to be mistaken; not a Sioux, — the form of his moccason showed this; nor a Pawnee, for the tortoise painted on his chest was not a mark of this tribe;

and I was lost in conjectures, which I was framing in my own mind concerning him, when he awoke.

"Dinner was ready, and our hunger was too real for us to delay our attention to the meal. He ate and drank in silence, and I remarked that he seemed to have partially recovered his strength; yet he was still unable to stand. His weakness was too great; and it was evident that he would have to remain where he was for some short time longer.

"In a few words, and without alluding to my affair with the Blackfeet (for I knew not with whom I had to do), I told him how I had arrived just in time to save him from being torn to pieces, or trampled to death by the buffalo.

"In doing this, I made use of a dialect which was pretty common on the prairies, and which is made up of English, French, and words taken from the languages of the different tribes. This dialect is especially used by trappers when on their long excursions, and I had easily learned to speak it when in company with Lewis.

"He understood me very well, and listened attentively to all that I said. Then he took my right hand in his, and, putting his other palm on my forehead, said these few words, —

"‘It is well. My pale brother is good. He will be my friend.’

"Then, with a gesture full of grace and dignity, he stretched himself upon the ground, and fell asleep.

"I quickly imitated him, yielding to sleep without any distrust, by the side of this savage, whom gratitude had made my friend, and who, feeble and unarmed, had trusted so completely in a stranger, whose sentiments of honor, as between man and man, he judged must be similar to those which he himself felt.

"At daybreak, I was awakened by the Indian, whose wound was now quickly healing, and who had collected strength by his long rest sufficient for him to again return to his village.

"Taking me by the hand, he said, that, after the service which I had rendered him, I had become his brother, and that he would not, nor could he, leave me alone in the desert, with the miserable weapons which I had, exposed to those dangers which I was liable to meet with at every step. He therefore engaged me to follow him to his tribe, where I should be joyfully received.

"I did not hesitate to accept this offer; for I felt very lonely in my present solitude, where I had been so happy when Lewis was with me. Moreover, this offer upon his part would give me a chance to see and study closely the manner and life of the red men amongst themselves.

"It was possible, also, that his tribe was in the habit

of dealing with white traders. If so, I should certainly find some means of reaching a city, and obtaining news from Europe, and from my dear friends in Germany.

“I therefore said to the Indian, that I accepted his offer, and was ready to follow him.

“He immediately arose, and, without saying another word, he followed a winding path which led to the banks of the river. Making his way through the thick reeds, which he did with evident difficulty, he soon re-appeared, dragging a canoe after him, which he launched upon the river, and into which we both stepped.

“We followed the course of the stream for a day and night, exchanging but few words, and passing our time either stretched in the bottom of the boat and smoking, or taking our turn with the paddle.

“It was with no ordinary pleasure that I accepted the pipe and tobacco which the chief offered me ; for, since my separation from Lewis, I had been deprived of this comfort, which would have been so precious in my solitude.

“On the morning of the second day, the river, making a sudden bend, brought us up to a collection of huts, in the midst of a plain covered with young trees. This was the Indian village to which we had been journeying.

“As soon as our approach was known, a great

clamor was heard on shore. All the inhabitants flocked to the bank, and, by their noisy reception, testified the respect and consideration in which they held my companion.

“Naturally enough, I was the object of general curiosity; and it must be granted all the looks fixed upon me were by no means the most agreeable or re-assuring.

“The chief landed, took me by the hand, and, without giving heed to the acclamations which greeted him, motioned to the crowd which pressed about us to stand aside, as, with a grave and dignified tread, he moved towards a wigwam larger than the others, and standing in the centre of the village. I afterwards found that this was the council-wigwam.

“It was of considerable size, and was built of four large upright trunks of trees, which supported cross-beams. The whole was filled in with willow-boughs and osier, which were afterwards covered over with earth and clay.

“In the centre was a hole, which served as a fireplace; while, exactly above it, an opening was cut in the roof, to let out the smoke, as well as to let in the light. Around the sides of the wigwam were places for sleeping, concealed by curtains of skins. Before the entrance was a sort of trophy, of both hunting and war. It was formed of two buffaloes' heads, painted brilliantly with ochre and a red pigment, and sur-

mounted by shields, bows and arrows, and other weapons.

“On entering the hut, the chief made me a sign to sit down upon a mat, which was reserved for strangers, and placed himself opposite me, upon a kind of cushion.

“An old man then presented himself, with the calumet of peace, which he lit, and presented to the chief, and then retired to the door.

“The chief, after a few whiffs, passed the pipe to me, and, as soon as I had imitated him, he made a sign to the old Indian, who appeared to act as a sort of herald.

“Climbing up to the roof, he put his head out of the opening made for air and light, and, with a strength of lungs which must have made him audible throughout the length and breadth of the village, he repeated what the chief dictated to him, and convoked the warriors and ancients to the council.

“Soon they began to arrive, one by one, as they were summoned or announced. Pushing aside the buffalo-skin hung before the door, they crossed the wigwam slowly and gravely, and took their seats on the skins spread upon the ground.

“I counted twenty, ranged around the hole which served as a hearth or fireplace. They were worthy the brush of a great painter; for the Aricaras (which was the name of the tribe amongst whom I now found

myself) are a noble race of Indians. Large, and well-proportioned, their whole appearance denoted a savage pride, and was marked by a gravity of manner which rendered all their ceremonies very imposing.

“As soon as they were all seated, the old Indian again lighted the pipe, and presented it to the chief. He gave three whiffs, looking, as he did so, first towards heaven, then towards the earth, and lastly towards the east. When this ceremony was concluded, he passed it to the nearest warrior, from whom it passed round the whole assemblage.

“They preserved profound silence and perfect impassibility; so that, except a few glances towards me, nothing showed the occasion or the purpose for which they had been summoned.

“The calumet ceremonies being at length ended, the Indian whom I had accompanied, and whom I had by this time discovered to be the chief of the tribe, arose with majesty, and, giving a haughty but noble glance around the circle of warriors, began his speech.

“While with the Canadian hunter, I had learned many words in use among the red men, and which are used for inter-communication among the tribes, each of which has, however, its own peculiar dialect. This knowledge, and the expressive gestures of the orators, enabled me to seize pretty closely the meaning

of all their remarks. The details, as I here relate them, I learned more perfectly a little later.

“The chief said, that he had gone from his camp in pursuit of a troop of buffaloes; and spoke of the moment when, having lassoed the young buffalo, the female had attacked him unexpectedly, and tossed him into the air, adding, that, from that moment, the Great Spirit had thrown a veil over his thoughts. Then he awoke again to the sun of heaven, and found himself in the hands of a pale-face, who was washing and dressing his wounds. His voice was harmoniously varied, according to his narration; now strong and clear, and then, again, gentle, and even tender. It was especially the last, when he spoke of the white man, who, by his care, had brought back the soul which was ready to travel to the prairies of Wacondah. Then his voice was deeply emotional, and affected by his gratitude. When he pointed me out as his preserver, the Indians all looked at me with kind faces; and their usually stern, impassible features were relaxed into kindness and approbation at the words of their chief.

“After his harangue, the chief resumed his seat, and awaited in silence the effect of his words.

“An ancient warrior rose shortly after, when a sufficient period for Indian dignity had elapsed, and went

to consult each of the other warriors, in a low tone of voice. Then he came, and stood before me.

“‘My son,’ said he, ‘the whole tribe of the Aricaras unite and thank you for having preserved the days of the Great Eagle, our mighty chief. The warriors who are here assembled desire you to live among us, as a brother and a friend.’

“The words of the old man were received with a murmur of approbation, and I bowed my head in token of assent and thanks. Each one of them came and placed the palm of his hand on the top of my head, in testimony of friendship.

“The Great Eagle then arose, and spoke as follows:—

“‘Ancients and warriors,’ said he, ‘to you, the head and heart of my nation, am I grateful for what you have done for him who has saved the life of your chief. I now wish to add to the recompense which my pale brother has merited by admitting him to my own wigwam. Let him be of my family. He shall fill the place of the brother whom the Great Spirit has called away. He shall share my arms and my riches; he shall sit by my hearth, with my wife and my sons; I will acknowledge him as my own brother, before the whole tribe.’

“I gave him my hand affectionately, and, amid the murmurs of satisfaction which the words of the chief

had caused, I signified my desire to speak. Silence was at once imposed upon the whole of the council, by their own sense of what was becoming towards the young stranger amongst them.

“I began by expressing, as well as it was possible, my deep gratitude at their offers and great kindness, and how painful it would be for me to refuse such proofs of their good feeling towards me. Then I went on to explain to them, that I had a country to which my heart was greatly attached; and that I could not thus give up a family (for I still had a lingering hope to discover my unknown parents), and the friends to whom I was so attached, when, perhaps, a father and a mother, aged and infirm, might ultimately receive, from the son they had never seen, the care which their old age required. I assured them of my friendship and devotedness, and said that my intention was, in accordance with their wishes, to remain some time among them; and that they should find me by their side, sharing their labors and their fatigues, like a true child of the prairie.

“The beginning of my speech had been received by my auditory with visible sorrow and disappointment: but, as I continued, their faces grew brighter; and, as I pledged myself to pass some time with them, they looked gratified.

“The Great Eagle approached, and promised, in the

name of the tribe, that I should be free to leave them, whenever I chose to return to the land of my fathers. However, while waiting this moment, which he begged me to put far away, I was free to live as an Aricara, should that suit me, or to remain under their protection as a stranger, to whom hospitality was due.

“The pipe was again passed round. We shook hands, rose, and quitted the wigwam.”



CHAPTER XVII.

AN INDIAN VILLAGE. — WILLIAM A DOCTOR.

“THE chief took me by the hand ; and we made the circuit of the village, to the sound of instruments of music, the barking of dogs, and the cries of the women and children.

“We were preceded by the old Indian, who announced to the tribe that I was recognized as the friend of the chief. The warriors and old men followed us to a wigwam, where the Great Eagle installed me ; and they all laid their hands upon me again, and then retired, leaving me alone.

“In a short time, several young women brought me some dried buffalo-meat, some smoked fish, and some potatoes, as well as the various utensils in use in an Indian household. After thanking them, I made a sign that I would like to take some repose.

“For a short time I remained plunged in sad reflec-

tions, thinking gloomily of my friends, my far off home, and the unhappy life which I should probably lead among the Indians, who are generally so cruel in disposition. The excitable wish to study novelty had now passed; and, in my calmer reflection, I saw that I ought to have profited by their gratitude to obtain a guide as far as St. Louis. I fancied that I should, perhaps, be a witness to scenes of murder and carnage, and my courage failed me.

“Recovering, however, after a while, from these gloomy considerations, I reflected upon the discoveries which I might make in this country, so wholly unknown,—the various natural productions of which I had then no idea; the nations, whose manners and customs and traditions I might learn; besides, recalling the liberty which I possessed to leave them when it might suit me.

“Accordingly, having shaken off my gloom, I determined upon examining the village where I now found myself.

“It was about ten o’clock in the morning, when I left my wigwam.

“While crossing the village, I noticed that it was divided into two distinct parts, each occupied by a section of the tribe. It was about one hundred yards wide, and two-thirds of a mile long, extending along the bank of the river. The wigwams were built simi-

larly to the council-chamber, and were in the shape of a truncated cone.

“The plain behind the village was bordered by a number of wooded hills; but, elsewhere, the country was almost wholly treeless, and presented a succession of valleys filled with tall grass, and flowers of every hue.

“While examining the face of the country, my attention was drawn to a singular spectacle. Upon the river were several canoes; but they were not made like those which I had hitherto seen, or, indeed, formed of wood. Each was composed of a single buffalo-skin, spread out upon some long sticks or boughs.

“In each of these was a squaw, who guided the frail boat with a paddle, and, attached to the after part of it, floated a bundle of faggots, for her household fire. This style of canoe is very common among the Indians. The facility with which buffalo-skins can be rolled up and transported on horseback makes them very handy for carrying small loads in their frail holds, across rivers and lakes.

“The immense number of horses which were grazing in the valleys and on the hill slopes attested the passion of the Aricaras for these animals. In fact, their great wealth consists in the number of horses they possess, for which they have a similar affection to that of an Arab for his courser. The Aricaras manage these beautiful animals with admirable skill, and justly de-

serve their reputation as the best horsemen of the prairies.

“Most of their horses came from the deserts beyond, though some had been bought of the Poncas, the Pawnees, or other south-westerly tribes, who probably stole them from the whites, in some of their numerous invasions. Animals of this class were recognizable by their short tails, and were destined only for sale, as the Indians themselves do not like even the slightest mutilation in any animal they at all esteem.

“For several days, I led the life of an Indian; that is to say, my time was passed in entire indolence, all mere labor being left to the women, whether in the field or in the house.

“They clean the wigwam, cut and bring the wood for the kitchen, and prepare the game which their lords have killed. They also cultivate small patches of maize, and other articles of food.

“Their time of enjoyment is sunset, when the labors of the day are over. Then they amuse themselves with various games; or else, passing their heads through the opening at the tops of their wigwams, they talk over the various events of the day.

“The Indians, while at their villages, spend their time on the banks of the river, on the slopes of the prairies, or seated before their huts. There they smoke, and talk over the affairs of their tribe, the events and ex-

exploits of the last hunt, or the histories of their warlike expeditions. They often, also, listen to the deeds of their ancestors, recited by some old warrior.

"At first, I joined these groups, where I was always received courteously, and where the pipe was immediately passed to me. However, when the novelty had passed away, I soon grew weary of this existence, and recommenced my wanderings.

"Amid this rich vegetation I daily made some interesting discovery.

"Here, it was a flower, magnificently colored; there, an insect, in gorgeous array, led me an exciting chase; or some new plant displayed its leaves, delicately traced as lace. Some herbs and shrubs I found, whose medicinal qualities had been explained to me by Lewis. These I carefully collected, in chance that I might need them.

"Happy in being able, in need, to show my gratitude to men who had shown me such generous hospitality, I employed my little knowledge in relieving their ailments.

"God allowed my efforts to succeed; and, in a short time, I was looked upon by the Aricaras more as a sorcerer than as a simple mortal.

"Two facts, which occurred in immediate succession, gave me a reputation as a doctor, which the color of

my skin, alone; was sufficient to warrant. In the opinion of the Indians, a white man comes into the world with medical science infused into him; and a refusal to assist the sick is looked upon by them as a sign of great ill-will.

“One morning, a woman in great apparent grief, and uttering loud outcries, passed quickly along towards the wigwam of their chief sorcerer, to procure some amulet to save the life of her child, which was in danger. Stopping her, I made her turn back with me to her dwelling. It was that of one of the bravest warriors of the tribe.

A child of seven or eight years was stretched upon some mats on the ground. It was crying violently, amid sharp spasms or convulsions.

“Its chest was cold, and its limbs were fast stiffening and numb. Looking around, while I had taken the child upon my knee, and was endeavoring to open its mouth, I perceived, on the ground, some branches and leaves of azedarach, a shrub possessing very violent and dangerous properties. The child had evidently eaten sufficient of its fruit to place him in his present serious danger.

“I had in my hut three plants, collected in my walks, which are powerful emetics. they were the *hol'n*; the *blue lobelia*, a charming prairie-flower; and

the *phytolacca*, a shrub whose berries are such a powerful purgative, that the flesh of pigeons which feed on them acquires this same property.

"This last I hastened back to get, and gave the child an infusion of it at once. The effect was rapid and decisive. The child threw up a considerable quantity of azedarach, and, in a short time, its pain ceased. I laid some cotton-tree leaves upon his stomach and chest, and, when he began to perspire, I went away, with the blessing of the poor mother. In a short time the child was running about, and playing with its companions, as well as ever.

"Two days later, the father returned from a hunt, and learned what had occurred. He came to see me, and, after a discourse which was full of feeling and energy, he begged me to accept the presents which he had brought me. These consisted of fruits, mats, furs, feathers, hatchets, a gun, some knives, and household utensils.

"To refuse would have been an insult; so I thankfully accepted his magnificent fee.

"The news of this cure was soon spread abroad in the village; and, before three days had elapsed, I was visited by one of the chiefs of the tribe, who begged me to come to his wife, who was slowly dying of some unknown disease.

"Although very doubtful of my own skill, I fol-

lowed him, being naturally desirous of losing no opportunity of being useful to a fellow-creature. Stretched upon some buffalo-robcs, I found a woman who was still young, but whose deep sunken eyes and sickly appearance made her appear much older than she really was. Her feebleness had very certainly been much increased by the unskilful treatment of the sorcerer of the tribe.

“Her hand was burning hot; and, after a few questions, I found she was suffering with one of those intermittent fevers which slowly undermine the whole constitution, and not unfrequently terminate in death.

“I recommended her husband to build a wigwam for her on one of the hills which overlooked the village, because her present dwelling was damp (being on low ground, and near the water); promising, at the same time, to do all in my power to relieve her.

“Going out of the village, I sought a spot where I had seen some *Tartarian honeysuckle*, some of which I gathered, as well as *plantain*, which was everywhere abundant. For want of the *tulip-tree*, the *willow*, or, better than any other, *quinquina* (Peruvian bark), I used these two plants, which, I was aware, were of benefit in cases of intermittent fever.

“My treatment was commenced the following day, before the access of fever, and continued for two or three weeks. Its effect, and the change of dwelling,

soon favored her recovery. Her strength returned, her appetite was excited, she slept quietly, and before long was able to move about, and tend to her usual duties.

“For this, also, I was obliged to receive visits of thanksgiving, gifts of every kind, and protestations of gratitude and devotedness, which I was only too careful to cultivate. The affection of men noted for their fidelity to their word was much too precious for me, alone in their midst, not to seek it most earnestly, or to neglect it when it was offered me.”



CHAPTER XVIII.

A BUFFALO-HUNT. — THE ANTELOPES. — A PANIC.

“ONE evening, the Great Eagle asked me if I would like to assist at a buffalo-hunt. I eagerly replied that I would follow him anywhere. We accordingly started at daybreak the following morning.

“We travelled for a good distance; and I saw that we were entering a very wild district, where the eye met with enormous prairies, which were enlivened here and there with innumerable troops of buffaloes.

“Sometimes we saw these animals at a distance, crossing the prairie slowly, in a long procession: at other times, they were variously grouped in the midst of a vast plain, covered with flowers, or on the slope of the verdure-clad hills. Part of them were enjoying the rich pasturage, while others were lying down, almost concealed in the tall grass.

“We reached a bank of the river, which seemed

almost covered with these animals. The Indians launched their canoes, and managed to kill several buffaloes while they were endeavoring to ford the stream.

“Continuing the hunt, we reached a small island, where they had landed. Some were reposing beneath the shady trees; others were refreshing themselves with a bath in the water, or rolling in the dirt, to get rid of the troublesome insects which annoyed them.

“Several of the best hunters entered a large boat, and, profiting by a good breeze, ascended the stream gently, without making any noise. The bisons remained quietly upon the shore, ignorant of the danger which threatened them. The hunters managed to surround the fattest of the troop, and, by firing altogether, killed a large number.

“Among these animals, we saw many elks, and some charming antelopes. The latter is the most graceful and admirable animal of the Western prairies.

There are in this country two species of antelopes; one about the size of a deer, the other not larger than a goat. Their color is a clear fawn, with white streaks, and their horns are small, like those of the deer.

“Nothing can equal the elegance and delicacy of their limbs, in which lightness, elasticity, and strength are combined in a remarkable manner. Every motion of this charming creature is supple and graceful. They

are fantastic and timid, living on the plains, and easily alarmed. When they are, they fly with such rapidity, that pursuit is useless; but their curiosity often costs them their life.

‘ When they have fled to a certain distance, and have left the hunter far behind, they stop suddenly, and turn to look at the occasion of their fright. If the hunter has not followed them, yielding to curiosity, they return to the place where they were first frightened, and thus fall into the snare which awaits them.

“ When our buffalo-hunt was over, I expressed regret that I had not captured an antelope in order to examine this charming animal still nearer. The Great Eagle replied, that, if I would come with him, he would get me one. Consequently I followed him with pleasure, away from the other hunters.

“ We had to walk during some four hours; for the antelopes, frightened by the reports of the guns, had retired farther from us, across the prairies.

“ At last we perceived a troop. Immediately the chief recommended me to remain quiet, and, throwing himself on his face in the tall grass, he bade me do the same. To satisfy my desire to catch one alive, he set a trap near by our place of concealment.

“ Knowing the wild character of the antelope, I was anxious to see how the Great Eagle would manage to draw him into the snare; but I was soon satisfied.

“He fastened a piece of skin to a pole which he had brought with him, and waved it gently above the grass.

“I soon saw one of those nearest us give a shy look at the object which floated in the air; then, as if yielding to an influence similar to that which snakes are said to exert, it cautiously approached, stopping occasionally, until, at last, it fell a victim to its curiosity.

“We immediately came out from our hiding-place; for its wild endeavors to get out of the trap might have broken its legs. The Great Eagle, however, tied them together, and I carried off my prize on my back.

“I rejoiced in the idea of preserving it to be offered to Bertha, when I should be able to re-visit Europe; but I soon had to renounce this intention. Notwithstanding all my efforts, the poor animal would take no nourishment; and, as I did not wish to kill it, at the end of two days I set it free. Deeply as I regretted this, it would have caused me greater pain to deprive it of its life by holding it captive.

“Some days after our return, the village was excited by the report that a party of Sioux, some five hundred strong, were approaching the camp.

“The Aricáras, who have suffered much in their struggles with this cruel and ferocious tribe, usually take greater precautions against surprise than the

other Indian tribes. They place sentinels upon surrounding eminences. As the prairies stretch far out of sight, like a vast ocean, no one can show himself, without being signalized at once, which information is communicated around with great rapidity. They have certain signs agreed upon, something after the style of our telegraph.

“Thus, when they see a herd of buffaloes, they begin to walk backwards and forwards; but, should it be a troop of enemies that they see, they run from left to right, crossing each other rapidly. At this signal, the whole tribe rushes to arms.

“One afternoon we had quite a serious alarm.

“Four sentinels, stationed on the top of a small hill, began to gallop, and cross each other's paths. Every one rushed to prepare for the fight.

“Men, women, and children cried and yelled; the dogs barked, and came close to the huts. Some warriors leaped upon their horses to reconnoitre. Others prepared their weapons and their bodies, and donned their tufts of feathers. Some went entirely naked, carrying only lance and shield. The women and children clambered to the tops of the wigwams, where their vociferations added to the confusion.

“The old men incapable of bearing arms watched the entrance to the village, and, when the warriors passed, they exhorted them to conquer or perish.

“Soon I saw the cavalry advance, commanded by the Great Eagle. There were about five hundred men, perfectly armed, and mounted on horses full of life and vigor. They brandished their weapons, uttering their war-cries, and making the place resound with their defiance of the Sioux.

“I did not hesitate to follow. The approach of danger, preparations for the fight, and the desire to signalize myself amid all these warriors whom I personally knew, animated me so, that I leaped upon a horse, and rode to the side of the chief. He seemed to notice me with some surprise; but, seeing by my eye that I was serious in my resolution, he looked highly pleased, and, taking his own tomahawk from his saddle, presented it to me.

“This was the greatest mark of esteem which he could offer; and, thanking him with a gesture, I fell in close behind him.

“When we had ridden some little time, one of our scouts came in, and reported that the enemy, finding his project discovered, had retired in all haste, and that thus the danger was over.

“Orders were given to watch, with great attention, for fear of a surprise; and we returned to camp.

“When dismounting, I wished to return the tomahawk to the chief who had handed it to me; but the Great Eagle refused it, and, beckoning to me as well as

to his warriors to follow him, he entered the council-wigwam. Then, after the usual ceremonies had taken place, he arose slowly, and with great dignity, looking around upon the assembly, spoke thus:—

“Chiefs and warriors, the Great Spirit has smiled upon his people, and has allowed a powerful White Sorcerer to come among us for our good. You have already seen the wicked spirits who had taken possession of the bodies of our wives and children fly before the great power of the White Sorcerer. To-day we are witnesses of a new proof of the power which the Wacondah has given to his pale son. The Sioux, our most bitter enemies, have fled like squaws when they saw this White Sorcerer at our head. To him do we owe that the scalps of our brethren and of ourselves do not hang at the doors of our enemy's wigwams. He has saved our nation, and cured our women and children. Let him, therefore, be our chief, and lead us on the war-trail. We will obey him. Let him, therefore, accept the token of command.”

“With these words, he loosed the circlet of eagle-feathers which bound his own brows, and laid it at my feet.

“Such is the superstition of these people, who do not understand the medicine of the whites, that they actually imagine it a work of sorcery to cure disease. According to them, the White Sorcerer is so powerful,

that he who would venture to ignore or resist his power would be instantly possessed by the bad spirits, and would waste gradually away, or die immediately.

"Hence, notwithstanding the grief which the proposition of the Great Eagle caused them, no one of the warriors dared to raise his voice to oppose it.

"Profiting by their credulity, I did not abuse it.

"I was not sorry to see my credit and standing augmented among them, and wished to preserve it, because it might one day be of service to me. Nevertheless, I did not, by any means, aspire or desire to become a chief of the red men.

"In turn, arising, I answered, that the Great Spirit had indeed sent me to them for the happiness of his beloved children, but that he did not wish the Great Eagle, one of the most powerful chiefs of the prairies, to give up his authority to me. On the contrary, he desired him to keep it in order to conduct his people again to victory.

"My words were received with shouts of joy; and the Great Eagle kissed me Indian fashion, that is on the mouth. This species of embrace, however, was a ceremony which I would most willingly have been excused from participating in, notwithstanding my true friendly feeling for the noble chief."

CHAPTER XIX.

A BATTLE.—WILLIAM SAVED BY THE GREAT EAGLE.

"SOME months later, as we were returning from a great hunt, a singular noise attracted the attention of the Indians; but my ears had not yet acquired the delicacy of perception of sound which the red man possesses in such an eminent degree.

"In fact, the slightest sound, at a very great distance, will awaken his attention. He recognizes the difference which exists between the step of a man of his own tribe and that of one belonging to another.

"The Panther, one of their most skilful warriors, was sent to discover the number and the nature of the enemy whom they had to combat. I saw him depart silently and rapidly through the bushes. His movements were so adroit, that I soon lost sight of him. No appearance of him was left in the prairie, no grass seemed to be pressed down where he had passed. We awaited in profound silence the return of our scout.

“Shortly after, the Great Eagle, near whom I was sitting, made a motion to take his rifle, but, throwing his head forward, he seemed satisfied, and returned to his former impassibility.

“In a few more minutes, an Indian made his appearance close to us. I could not repress an exclamation of surprise, and was about to seize a weapon, when the chief pronounced the word ‘Panther.’ At once I recognized him who had been sent to scout; but I could never explain to myself how he had managed to return by the side opposite to that by which he departed, and that too, without any noise being made, or any motion in the long grass of the prairie.

“The Panther told us that a party of Sioux were hunting buffaloes in the neighborhood. He, however, suspected, that, under pretence of a hunt, they concealed the design of approaching our village, because they were armed for battle.

“The Great Eagle immediately made his dispositions for the purpose of causing them to fall into an ambuscade.

“Near us was a small grove, which was joined to the woody part of a hill that closed in the plain on one side. The sounds which we heard came from beyond this wood, so that we were completely hidden from the eyes of the Sioux.

“Our chief ordered us all to pass among the trees on

the edge of the wood, and on the side where our adversaries would approach.

"The Aricaras stood quietly beside their horses, intelligent animals, who seemed to understand that one-half the battle depended upon them, in consequence of which, no neighing, and not the slightest movement, betrayed their presence:

"The Sioux soon appeared pursuing several buffaloes.

"Immediately the Great Eagle leaped upon his horse, and, followed by all his warriors, precipitated himself upon the enemy, who, not expecting our attack, at first took to flight. However, the courage natural to their tribe made them return to the contest after joining their chief force; and they then advanced, uttering loud war-cries.

"I must own that, at this moment, I lost all presence of mind. It was the first time that I was present at an engagement with these Indians; and their yelling appeared so savage and extraordinary, that I at first remained motionless as if I had been turned into marble.

"The Sioux formed rapidly in a semicircle, and sought to envelop us. Our great chief, nevertheless, saw the danger; and, by a movement equally well ordered and executed, the line of the Sioux was obliged to turn upon its left to prevent being flanked by us.

"From this moment the *mêlée* became general. At first, nothing could be heard but the reports of rifles,

accompanied with the horrible yells of the savages: then each one seized his tomahawk and rushed, brandishing it upon whatever adversary chanced to be next him.

“After the first few moments of the struggle, I recollected my scattered senses, and, excited by the smell of powder, rushed into the struggle.

“A tall Sioux, with repulsive visage, and extraordinarily painted, perceived me, and, urging his horse across my path, directed a stroke of his tomahawk at me, which, thanks to the prompt action of the animal I was riding, merely grazed my arm without wounding me. The Sioux had dashed in so swiftly, that his horse made two or three steps beyond me, before he could check it. As he returned, I fired my rifle, and falling from his saddle, with a terrible cry of rage, he expired.

“This first victory augmented my ardor, and, seizing the tomahawk which hung from my saddle, I followed towards the spot where I saw the tall feather of the Great Eagle waving in the fray. A horrible carnage had been going on around him and two Aricaras, who were surrounded by Sioux. There were already lying dead around them several of our brave fellows who had fallen while defending their chief.

“He was worthy of his name. His eyes, which seemed literally to flash with light, appeared to mock at the death which threatened him on every side. His tomahawk fell every moment. Swung by a firm hand,

each time it was raised it was stained by the blood of another Sioux who fell in death beneath his terrible arm.

“Just as I approached, full gallop, his strength began to fail. One of his defenders had just been wounded by a knife. With a fury of which I did not know myself capable, I attacked from behind the Sioux who were pressing on him, and wielded so successfully the terrible weapon which he had given me, that two of his stoutest enemies fell beneath its blows.

“Our chief was relieved; but I had fallen into a still greater peril. I was scarcely master of my horse, and was trying to manage it while I was also defending myself, when a Sioux, wounded, and stretched upon the ground, gave the poor beast such a violent blow with his knife in the stomach, that it fell, crushing the savage who dealt the blow, and throwing me violently to the earth.

“I felt myself lost; and a dozen knives and hatchets were raised to despatch me, when a terrible war-cry sounded at my side, and a tomahawk with rapid circle turned aside the weapons which menaced me. The Great Eagle had seen me fall, and came, with lightning speed, to pay me, in turn, the debt of gratitude which he had so recently incurred.

“Followed by several warriors, he overturned all who opposed him. In a very few moments, I was freed, and

rose without a single wound, although I was stained with the blood which covered the ground.

“This decided the victory.

“All the Sioux whom the swiftness of their horses did not preserve from the blows of the Aricaras were pitilessly murdered, and I saw, when the fray had ended, all around me the traces of a shocking massacre.

“The Aricaras who survived, even the wounded, joined their voices in one long, last battle-cry of victory, and then proceeded to indulge in the repulsive occupation of scalping their dead enemies.

“The scalp thus torn from the head of their foes is, in their eyes, a great trophy, which the Indian hangs from his waist when he goes to battle, and at the door of his wigwam in time of peace.

“I turned my eyes in horror from this sight, and went to sit down at a distance, that I might not be a witness of this horrible mutilation.

“The Great Eagle came up, and said that I also ought to take the scalp of the enemies whom I had killed, that I might present myself as a true chief before the Manitou.

“My reply was that the custom of my country forbade such things. I had killed the Sioux only in defence of my life and that of men who had received me as a brother, and that I would leave their scalps to whoever wished to take them.

“To these words he merely replied with a grunt, that is significative of great surprise among the Indians, and, disdaining to say any more upon the subject, went away to collect his warriors, and prepare to return home.”



CHAPTER XX.

TRIUMPHAL RETURN.—THE FUNERAL.

“AFTER a march of two days, we arrived about three miles from camp about sunrise.

“As this is a common hour for surprises among the Indians, the sentinels gave the alarm, mistaking us in the distance for Sioux.

“We soon saw the tops of the wigwams covered with the Aricaras; and the Great Eagle sent a messenger forward to re-assure his tribe, and to announce the bloody conflict in which we had defeated the Sioux, with a loss of only eighteen killed and a dozen wounded.

“As soon as the news of the victory was received, the village was filled with joy; and a brilliant reception was prepared for us.

“All the finest equipments of the warriors were sent to them, that they might appear with all the magnificence possible.

“As I knew that their preparations would require, probably, a good portion of the day, and as I wished to witness a ceremony which I might never have another occasion to enjoy, I took leave of the Great Eagle, and decided to return to the village, where my exploits had already been made known by the messengers.

“My arrival caused a general surprise, as they expected that I would paint and decorate myself like the other warriors. However, the characteristic taciturnity of the race prevented them from asking any questions.

“Those who had not taken part in the affair put on their finest array of ornaments to do honor to the coming heroes.

“The Aricaras, like most Indian tribes, generally go nearly naked. They, nevertheless, have a good toilet for ceremonial occasions.

“At such times, they usually wear an upper garment of some bright color, ordinarily blue or red. They wrap their legs in antelope-skins, ornamented with porcupine-quills of richly variegated colors. Fastened to their shoulders, and falling gracefully from them, is a handsome mantle of buffalo-skin. A well-filled quiver is slung across their back, and the head is surmounted by a coronet of feathers. Of these, they prefer those of the swan. The most renowned chiefs alone are allowed to wear those of the black eagle, which bird is held as sacred by all tribes of Indians.

“One who has killed an enemy with his own hand may attach a fox’s or wolf’s tail to the heels of his moccasins, while those who have killed a grisly bear wear his claws for a necklace. This is the most honorable decoration of a hunter, and entitles him to enter the council of the nation.

“At the camp, as well as in the village, all were busy preparing for the coming ceremony.

“An Indian’s state toilet is an operation which requires much care and labor; for he often paints himself from head to foot: and the combination of lines and emblems, of every conceivable nature and color, requires considerable skill. So a full quarter of the day passed, and nothing, as yet, announced the triumphal march of the victors.

“Meanwhile, deep silence reigned in the village. Many of the inhabitants had gone to meet the victors. The rest remained in silent suspense. All labor was suspended; and no one was visible, save the women who were preparing the feast for the warriors. The very children seemed unwilling to disturb the solemn pause that occurred previous to the triumphal entrance of their fathers and relatives.

“Towards noon, the sound of instruments and human voices announced that the procession was on the march. The old men and several of the women

left their wigwams to receive the victors at the entrance of the village.

"The sight was to me both strange and picturesque, as they appeared ascending a hill with slow and measured steps to the cadence of their chants and savage music.

"Their war banners, composed of the skins of animals, floated in the wind. The feathers, paint, and silver ornaments, with which they had decked themselves, glittered beneath the rays of the July sun.

"There was something really solemn and majestic in their appearance.

"The Aricaras are divided into four bands, or companies, each bearing the name of some animal or bird, as the buffalo, the bear, the dog, and the pheasant. The one most esteemed is that of the *dog*, which is composed of young men under thirty. To belong to this band, one must have performed some striking deed, as it is always looked to in desperate affairs, and forms a sort of reserve-guard.

"The principal chief of the tribe is chosen from among the Dogs, and among them the Great Eagle performed his first feats of arms, and displayed his courage.

"These bands approached separately, under respective chiefs. Those on foot came first in line, ten deep, and afterwards followed those who were mounted.

“In front of each band marched a warrior, holding, as a standard, a lance or a bow, ornamented with necklaces of porcupine-quills, skins of animals, and painted feathers. Several carried, as trophies, scalps hanging from long poles, all bloody and matted as they swung in the wind. There was also at the head of each band a sort of bard or minstrel, who sang the exploits of the fight; while several Indians did their best to produce sounds, for I am unable to call them music, from their various instruments.

“The warriors were not all armed in the same manner. Some had guns, and others bows and arrows, or tomahawks. All had buffalo-hide bucklers, or shields, which is the general means of defence used by the Indians of the desert, who have not the shelter of the woods to protect them from the arrows of their enemies.

“They were all painted in the most horrible manner, according to individual taste. Some, even, had bloody hands painted near their mouths, to signify that they had taken the life of an adversary.

“As they approached the village, they were received with acclamations of joy, joined with lamentations for the warriors who had died on the field. They, however, maintained solemn, impassible features as they continued their slow advance.

“Between the Great Eagle and another principal

chief rode a young warrior who had distinguished himself in the battle. He was so severely wounded that it was with the greatest difficulty he could sit upon his horse. But, in spite of his sufferings, he preserved a calm countenance, as if regardless of his condition.

“His poor mother, who had learned his condition, ran towards him, crying, and shedding bitter tears. He, until the last, maintained the calm stoicism of a true Indian warrior. No emotion was visible in his face, and yet he expired in a few moments after reaching the wigwam of his parent.

“Meanwhile, the village was a scene of almost delirious joy.

“The banners, scalps, bucklers, and other trophies captured from the Sioux, were fixed on poles, and suspended in front of the wigwams. The Indians executed their war-dance, accompanied with a battle-song and music, so outrageously discordant, that I was almost deafened by it; while heralds-at-arms, if I may call them so, went from hut to hut, repeating in loud tones the details of the combat and the bold deeds of the warriors.

“Amid this noisy festival, I caught some strange sounds, apparently of mourning, from the neighboring hills; and, inquiring what these were, an Indian informed me that the women were there lamenting the loss of

their dead. They were the mothers, wives, and daughters of those who had fallen beneath the blows of the Sioux, and had retired to solitude where they might freely indulge their grief.

“The rejoicings lasted until night, and, if the Sioux had then come to attack their enemies, I really do not know what might have happened.

“The next day, at early dawn, I was awakened by the Great Eagle, who came to invite me to assist at the funeral ceremonies. I followed him, and, in the middle of the village, I found all the tribe assembled,—no longer joyous for their victory, as on the preceding day, but seated in profound silence, and representing a nation in mourning.

“When we arrived, the bodies of eighteen dead braves had been already committed to the earth, and there remained only the young Indian who had expired at the very door of his wigwam.

“The body was seated as if he were living, in a noble and imposing attitude, and clothed in his richest ornaments. A crown of eagle’s plumes was on his head; necklaces, bracelets, and medals covered his body: but his sightless eye and decomposing features marked too plainly the presence of death for any one to mistake it.

“At his feet were his lance and shield. On his knees were his bow and arrows. Near him his horse, capari-

soned as for war, waited to be immolated on his grave. He seemed to understand the universal grief; for his head was drooped as he gazed sadly at the remains of his former master.

“An old man arose, and slowly spoke as follows:—

“‘Brother, the Manitou had need of a great warrior. He called one of his children, and our brother has gone to the great prairie. His life has passed as rapidly as the course of the sun; but it was more brilliant than the father of light at noontide. He was the Panther of his tribe. His foot was as fleet as that of the antelope. His eye shone like the fire which blazed from his gun, and his voice in war was like the thunder. He was brave, good, and useful. The Manitou had need of such a warrior. He has called him.’

“The silence was profound, and was broken only by the voices of the women, who commenced singing a kind of dirge. The melody was very sweet and melancholy. Each in turn sang of the exploits of the dead brave, and, at the end of each strophe, they repeated a kind of monotonous chorus.

“When they had terminated this song, one of the men arose, and sang also the praises of the dead. He was succeeded by others; and all the warriors of the tribe, in turn, paid tribute to the memory of the defunct.

“Immediately after, the Great Eagle rose. Then wrapping the body in a buffalo-skin, they deposited it

in a bark coffin, borne by four young men; after which the procession started.

“When they reached the burial-place, the coffin was placed in the ground, its head turned towards the east, and was covered with instruments of war and hunting. An opening was made in the bier, so that the spirit might communicate at pleasure with the mortal remains; and the whole was protected from the attacks of beasts of prey by means of large stones and thorny bushes, which were in turn covered with the earth, and carefully pressed down with the feet. His horse was then led forward, and immolated over his grave, that the Indian might present himself before the Great Spirit in a manner becoming a brave warrior.

“Amid the silence which followed was heard the voice of the Great Eagle:—

“‘It is enough,’ said he: ‘children of the Aricaras, the Manitou is satisfied.’

“The tribe dispersed in silence, and every one returned to his usual occupations.

CHAPTER XXI.

EXCURSIONS.—A PRISONER.

“I HAD now been more than two years among the Aricaras.

“During the first months we had repulsed several attacks of the Sioux; but constantly beaten, and meeting with great losses, these warlike Indians had at length quitted our territories, and we had since enjoyed profound peace.

“During all this time, I lived quietly, dividing my time between hunting and natural history. I had become a singularly good marksman, and rarely missed any game which came within reach of my rifle; so that I received the name of the *Buffalo-killer*. I made solitary excursions in the neighborhood, sometimes remaining two or three days absent from the village.

“I was returning from one of these excursions, re-

fleeing upon my present life among these savage people. As I was thinking busily of my friends on the far side of the ocean, who must have long since given me up for altogether lost to them, I heard a horse galloping behind me.

"It was an Aricara, who, having rejoined me, informed me that there was news in the camp since I had last left it.

"Traces of traps had been seen on the banks of the river which flowed before the village; and the Indians, jealous of the exclusive possession of their territory, had gone out to watch for the marauders who came to hunt on their grounds, which had belonged to their fathers.

"They were not long in finding a white hunter, who, seeing himself surrounded, wished at least to sell his life dearly.

"They had succeeded in taking him alive; but the victory had cost them the lives of three of their best warriors, who fell beneath his unerring aim.

"Bound closely, he was led to the camp; and the assembled council had decided that he should be burned at the stake.

"The Indian desired me to hasten if I would witness what he called *a feast*. The punishment was to take place that same day; and he thought that no true

red-skin could be dispensed with, in assisting at such a ceremony.

“As to myself, I was an Indian only in dress, and manner of life; and, having preserved the belief and feeling of a Christian, my heart was oppressed at the recital. I consequently suffered the Indian to urge his horse to its full speed, and hurry along.

“‘Yet another human victim!’ I thought; ‘more blood! and why? Because this unlucky hunter has set his traps on this side of the river instead of on the other. If I had been in the village at the time of the expedition, I would have accompanied it, and might, perhaps, have prevented the bloody conflict, which now calls in their minds for this cruel retaliation. I know the law of the prairies, — *‘an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth;*’ and the slain warriors now reclaim, as an expiatory sacrifice, the death of him who killed them while defending his own life.’

“Thus reflecting, and leaving my horse to his own pace, I at length reached the village. I heard the infernal music of the scalping-dance, the vociferations of women and children, the barking of dogs, and smelt the smoke of the kindling-wood at the fatal stake.

“My horse stopped by a wigwam which stood near the Great Square, in the middle of which arose the stake, already surrounded with the leaping and flashing flames.

"I turned my eye towards the victim. . . . A cloud passed before my sight, the blood rushed to my temples. Great God! what had I seen! Lewis, Lewis, the friend whom I remembered, and whom I mourned, — Lewis, the friend and brother of my prairie-life, was about to perish by an atrociously cruel death!

"Not a moment was left me for reflection. Action must be immediate. Seizing my tomahawk, I leaped from my horse, and rushed to the stake, hurling aside and overturning every thing that came in my way. Pushing aside the kindling brush, with a stroke of my knife I cut the cords which bound Lewis, and gave him a hatchet, which I snatched from the ground. Then, turning to the stupefied crowd, I cried, —

"'Wretches! this is my brother. If you wish for his life, you must first take mine.'

"My movement was so sudden and unexpected, that no one had opposed it; and we were ready for a desperate defence, before a single warrior could advance.

"The Aricaras knew that I was afraid of no danger. Lewis had already given them sufficient proof of his intrepid bravery. They had, therefore, before them two adversaries, ready to die, but not unavenged.

"For a moment, they remained silent, in hesitation; then, seizing their weapons, they rushed upon us, uttering wild cries of rage.



“I pressed Lewis by the hand, and then we prepared for the fight.

“At this moment the Great Eagle advanced, and, stretching out his tomahawk, signified his wish to speak.

“Silence was at once obtained.

“Approaching a few steps, and addressing me, he said, —

“‘Why does my young pale brother wish to oppose the just vengeance of his brethren? Does he not know that the white hunter has shed the blood of the Aricaras, and that three of our most illustrious warriors have gone to join our fathers, in the land of the Great Spirit? Let him cease, then, to oppose our justice, or our anger will fall upon him also.’

“‘Let the powerful chief who is before me permit me to speak,’ I replied; ‘and let him promise to hear me to the end. He will see that his brother is still worthy of his friendship and that of the men of his tribe.’

“The Great Eagle made the promise which I required, and I commenced.

“I first recalled my entrance into the tribe, the part which I had taken in their exploits, the honors which they had showered upon me in recompense for my services, and the care which I had bestowed upon their women and children. Then, pleading the cause of

Lewis, I narrated how he had received me when I was about to die of hunger and misery, the days in the prairie and the forest which we had spent together, the dangers we had shared, and our struggle with the Blackfeet (who are enemies of the Aricaras also); a struggle in which I had believed Lewis to have lost his life, and which had been the cause of my arrival in the tribe.

“‘You reproach him,’ I continued, ‘with having shed the blood of your brothers. Did he come to shed your blood, or to burn your wigwams? Did he try to carry off your women and your children? Did he steal your horses? No. He defended himself; and, when you attacked him, he was peaceably pursuing his occupation. Are not the prairies large enough for us all to live in? Has not the Great Spirit created means enough for all men to have sufficient without trouble? Thousands of buffaloes eat the grass of the plains, elks and antelopes abound in immense herds, beavers in every stream, and pigeons obscure the heavens with their numbers; yet you refuse a man the right to take his share of the benefits provided for all by the great Creator. Why do you not wish to possess for yourselves alone the driving wind and the swiftly flowing waters, the lightnings which divide the heavens, and the storm which rolls to the Rocky Mountains? Fear, lest the Great Manitou punish you

cruelty, and withdraw the protection which you have enjoyed for two years!’

“My brother knows,” said the Great Eagle, ‘blood requires blood.’

“Blood that is shed can be bought back,” I replied. ‘The hunter of the prairies is rich; he has arms and powder and furs; he will load with presents the great chiefs and the widows of the warriors.’

“I saw signs of hesitation in the faces of the Indians. They looked at one another, and consulted in a low voice.

“The women, who approached, had forgotten their animosity. But every thing was yet at stake, and a word might lose us (for we could not hope to come alive out of such an unequal combat), when the Great Eagle placed his tomahawk on the ground, and said, ‘If the chiefs and warriors consent, I agree to the conditions of my brother. The pale-face shall be saved.’ Two Indians at once stepped forward from the circle. They were the Piercing Eye and the Fox.

“I had cured the wife of the first of a fever which was wasting her life, and the child of the other from the effects of poison.

“‘Our white brother has spoken well,’ said one; ‘let his proposition be accepted.’ The other said the same; and all the rest very soon expressed a similar opinion. There was a little murmuring, but the danger was

over; and I thanked God from the bottom of my heart, for the courage and the eloquence which he had given me at this supreme moment.

“The Great Eagle and all the braves came to press our hands; and it was agreed, that, in a few days, Lewis, I, and some twenty warriors, should go to one of the caches of Lewis, which contained the presents he was to make in the tribe.”



CHAPTER XXII.

HISTORY OF LEWIS.—THE FIRE.—HEROIC ACT.

“I LED my friend into my hut, and there we gave expression to our mutual friendship, which had in the last hour, if possible, become still closer than it was before.

“Lewis first wished to know by what series of events I found myself so well installed among the Aricaras. I hastened to satisfy him, and recounted in detail my singular history.

“After this was terminated, I insisted upon knowing his also; and he proceeded to recount it to me in the following terms:—

““You know, my dear William, that, at the very moment the Blackfeet surrounded our canoe, I had decided to push off into the current; but several Indians leaped into the boat. One of them threw himself towards me, with his tomahawk raised; but my hatchet

was in my hand, and, to give more strength to my blow, I leaned back. Just then my foot slipped, and I lost my balance. As the Indian's arm was lifted to bury his hatchet in my brain, I received an arrow in my right shoulder, and fell into the water. I heard your shout as you came to my assistance while I was sinking in the river. I got entangled in the grass at the bottom of the stream, and felt myself suffocating in it. Indeed, it was by an almost incredible effort that I succeeded in reaching the surface. My wound had disabled one hand, so that I was able to swim only with difficulty. I tried to rejoin you to save you, or share your fate; but the stream was rapid, and carried me so far, that, when I reached the shore and returned to the place of the fight, all was over. I was without weapons, and my shoulder pained me terribly; though the wound was not dangerous, and healed rapidly. I passed the night in a tree, and the next day I followed the tracks of your captors. Noticing the footprints of two Indians, I saw that they were deeper impressed than the others; whence I concluded that they were carrying a load. You might not be dead, then, but were, perhaps, severely wounded. This afflicted my heart. Farther on I found your own footprints, light and regular; and my mind was consequently relieved. Reaching the neighborhood of the camp just after you. I was seeking an entrance, when I was obliged to escape

quickly. An Indian whom I did not recognize, but who, you have informed me, was the *Jaguar* saved by us from the bear, was examining the environs. When I was able to return unseen, I found the tribe in a state of excitement, and guessed that something extraordinary had happened. I awaited, and two days after I found your tracks near a cotton-grove, close to the river; for I was only able to search for them when the Indians were not visible. These tracks were crossed in every direction, and mingled with those of the Indians. These were the indications of your flight. But how should I rejoin you? Did you swim across the river? or did you follow the current? After spending a whole week examining bushes, trees, leaves, the ground, there appeared no trace. With a broken heart, I gave up the search, called upon Heaven to protect you, and sadly took my way to the *cache* where we had been together. I took thence all that I needed to re-commence my business as a trapper; and since that time I have traversed prairie and wood, often thinking of you, whose friendship had been so precious to me, and whose devotion had been so often manifested.

“Such, my dear William, is the recital of my life since we separated; and I sincerely trust that we shall not be parted again.”

“I pressed my friend’s hand affectionately, and, after our curiosity was thus satisfied, we appeased the nat-

ural hunger, which we had a while forgotten, and then sought the repose which we both needed after so fierce an excitement.

“The next day we made our preparations to set out for the cache of Lewis. Twenty Aricaras were to accompany us. I obtained permission from the Great Eagle that they should be commanded by the Fox and the Piercing Eye; for I was not sorry to have with me two influential and intrepid warriors who had proved their gratitude to me by interfering the first to save Lewis from the stake. We had been two days on the way, when our horses showed visible signs of trepidation and disquietude. The wind was violent, and the air became filled with a dark and penetrating vapor, which affected our eyes.

“The Fox advanced quickly to a small eminence, looked in the direction of the wind, and returned as hastily as he could.

“‘The prairie is on fire!’ was all that he said.

“We urged our horses to a gallop at this critical announcement.

“On our left, as far as we could see, was a line of sharp, impassable rocks, extending to one of the tributary streams of the Missouri.

“On our right was the immense plain, over which the flames spread almost as rapidly as the wind which swept them along. Behind us, perhaps, the flames also

would present their impenetrable barrier. There was but one chance,—to follow the line of the rocks to the river at our utmost speed.

“The smoke soon enveloped us on every side. The roar of the advancing flames was joined with the occasional crash of falling trees and crackling timber. The heated sap forced its way through the wood, with explosions like shells in battle.

“Hundreds of animals, of every species, fled on all sides, pushing and crowding on each other,—the antelope by the side of the jaguar, the buffalo and the wolf, prairie-dogs and squirrels,—all forgetful of their destructive instincts and enmities in the midst of their wild race for life.

“In front of the curtain of fire, preceding it but a few yards, was an immense flock of birds of prey, swift in flight, and pouncing every few minutes upon some luckless reptile or animal.

“It was a fearful sight. Our horses almost seemed to annihilate space. Bent over their necks, we could scarcely breathe in the burning atmosphere; yet, notwithstanding the rapidity of our course, we saw the flame approaching closer and closer to lap us in its mortal embrace.

“Suddenly the horse of the Fox reared, uttered a cry of terror, and fell, burying his rider beneath his fallen body.

“His hoof had trodden upon a large serpent; and the furious reptile, neglectful of his own danger, had fastened on to the leg of the animal, and was biting him cruelly.

“Lewis saw the peril which threatened our companion, and by a powerful effort stopped his own horse. ‘Fly,’ said he, ‘I will save him!’

“He wheeled his horse towards the Indian; but the animal refused to advance. At this moment, our brave friend drove the blade of his knife into it; and the poor beast, overcome with pain, sprang towards the spot where the flames had almost seized the Fox, who was in vain struggling to free himself from his horse. With a desperate effort, Lewis drew him from the saddle, and, lifting him upon his own horse, turned, and gave the horse rein.

“The wind was not swifter than the affrighted animal, which passed us like an arrow; and in a few moments we saw them disappear from the top of the rocks into the water. We also soon reached the rocks. It was time that we did so; for the fire almost surrounded us.

“We were twenty-five feet above the river; but we dared not hesitate. Even at the risk of death, we must try to preserve our lives. In we went, and in a few moments climbed the opposite bank in safety.

In front of us, a curtain of smoke and flame reached

to the limits of the horizon. It was, however, powerless against us, because of the protecting waters. We counted, and found all of our party safe. Five noble horses, however, were dead, either in striking the water, or from the apoplexy induced by immersion into the cold stream after so long and rapid a course.

“We were all seated in silence, when the Fox, rising, approached Lewis, and held out his hand with a perfect air of majesty.

“‘The great hunter of the prairies has saved the life of a chief of the Aricaras,’ said he. ‘Let him be my brother, and rest his head in peace beneath my wigwam.’

“Lewis rose, and replied with a vigorous shake of the hand offered by the Fox.

“‘May it be as my brother wishes!’ said he. ‘Heaven, earth, water, and fire will be powerless to oppose when my brother needs the assistance of my arm.’

“Then these two generous men embraced, exchanged their calumet, and our circle became once more silent.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CANADIAN TRADERS.—SEPARATION.

“AFTER resting ourselves, and giving our horses a chance to recruit their strength, we ascended the river, and, crossing farther up, we reached Lewis’s cache without difficulty.

“He emptied it entirely, offered a magnificent rifle to his new friend, hatchets and knives to the other Indians; and, putting the rest of his merchandise on the horses, he gave the signal for departure, and we set out on our return.

“We were obliged to make a long circuit to avoid the fire, which must have spread to a great distance; and directed our course eastward.

“We crossed a plain, however, which had been swept by the flames. The ground was still warm. Half-roasted animals, which the vultures were rapidly devouring, lay here and there. Enormous trees, reduced

to charcoal, encumbered our way; and yet vegetation is so powerful there, that we could almost already distinguish the new grass beginning to sprout through the ashes.

“A rain-storm, or even heavy dews, with a week of mild temperature such as we then enjoyed, and a traveler would not suspect that a terrible conflagration had swept the earth, and overspread it, some seven days earlier, with ruin.

“Our arrival in camp was a signal for enjoyment. The Fox had preceded us, and Lewis was received as the brother of a great chief deserved to be. The presents which he made to each one secured for him the sympathies of the whole tribe.

“I had induced Lewis to promise to accompany me, when we should leave the Aricaras, to seek some white settlement. But we could not leave our new friends so quickly. It was necessary to await the arrival of the fur-merchants; and it was but a short time since the hatchet had been buried between the whites and the tribes bordering on the Missouri and Mississippi.

“We re-commenced our hunting expeditions, not only for our food, but to collect a quantity of skins and furs with which to pay our passage on some vessel; and, during the months which we passed with the Indians, we succeeded in obtaining quite a large proportion of valuable peltry.

“At last the day arrived which I had so long and so impatiently awaited.

“I saw the Canadian traders coming down the river on long barges which they used as stores. They came to buy horses and furs in exchange for arms, powder, stuffs, and a crowd of gew-gaws which are always so enticing for the Indians.

“I proposed to pay our passage in furs, which they willingly accepted. To my inquiry where they were going, they told me that their intention was to go to St. Louis, which is the first American station for the fur-traders.

“St. Louis being situated on the right of the Mississippi, a short distance below its confluence with the Missouri, this river had to be followed to reach our destination.

“I went immediately to announce my determination to the Great Eagle, pointing out the motives which obliged Lewis and myself to leave the tribe which had afforded us such a generous and friendly hospitality. I expressed in warm terms my deep regret, but ended by saying that my decision was irrevocable.

“After hearing me in silence, the Great Eagle, in spite of his habitual reserve, expressed very warmly his regret at being deprived of such friends as we were, more especially of me, whom he regarded as his brother. At the same time, he had too much delicacy

to try to prevent me, understanding perfectly, he said, my natural desire to revisit the land of my fathers.

“A great council was called to announce to the warriors of the tribe our approaching departure. The news was received with silence and regret; but no objection was raised.

“After a pause, an old man arose, and, advancing to the middle of the circle, said that ‘the Manitou had sent a warrior and a sage among them, but that now he needed them for his other children, and that his will must be accomplished.’

“He then sat down, and we re-commenced to smoke. In a few minutes, the same old man shook the ashes out of his pipe, wrapped himself up with solemn majesty in his blanket, and left the wigwam. Each Indian did the same, and Lewis and I were soon alone.

“Rising also, I returned to my own wigwam, which was soon filled with furs, feathers, bows, arrows, lances, &c., which the good Aricaras offered me in remembrance. This new proof of sympathy affected me deeply.

“On the day of our departure, I was still more deeply impressed when the whole tribe, without arms, and grief written on every countenance, came to accompany us to the river bank.

“They ranged themselves in a circle, and the Great Eagle spoke in their richly figurative style.

“He commenced by talking of the great fame of his nation, of their success in war and in hunting, then, by a sudden transition, he alluded to me. He said that I had not come to carry off their women, nor the game of their prairies; but that, on the contrary, I had been sent by the Great Spirit for the glory and the happiness of his people; that I left them to return to those who had watched over my early years; that I would say to all pale faces how noble and brave were the Aricaras, grateful and true to their friends, and terrible to their enemies; that, if the will of the Great Manitou should bring me back, I should be received as a brother. He associated Lewis in all these high remarks, and assured him of his kind remembrance.

“The ceremony of bidding farewell was imposing. Each warrior came to press our hands and those of the traders.

“When, however, the Fox parted from Lewis, he showed more evidences of real emotion than I had ever previously seen betrayed by any Indian. The corner of his eyes, and his under lip, quivered with the enforced control which he placed upon himself. He endeavored to speak; but he felt that his voice would show how deeply he was troubled. He, therefore, took Lewis’s right hand, and placed it upon the crown of his head; thus intimating that he considered himself bound to the trapper for life, after which he hurried away, and retired into his wigwam.

“Lewis afterwards told me that he himself was as much surprised as I had been at this unusual display of feeling, and could scarcely account for it — ‘unless, indeed, the Aricara had white blood in his veins.’ This indeed was a supposition which had previously struck me, although never so forcibly. On subsequent inquiry, I found that this idea was correct. His father had married a white squaw who had been taken captive by the Sioux when quite a child. The Sioux village in which she had grown up to be a marriageable maiden having been sacked and destroyed by a party of Aricaras under the leadership of Hawk Eye, the father of the Fox, she was saved and carried off by him. The result was, that she ‘entered his wigwam;’ this being the Indian phrase to signify that she afterwards became his wife. This, however, was learnt by me on my next visit to the tribe.

“When we embarked in the boats, I, being the last to leave the shore, waved my shield to the Aricaras in token of ‘adieu;’ and they responded with their peculiar shout.

“Then the boats were pushed from the shore. The current bore us rapidly away, and the village and its inhabitants soon receded from sight. I sat down, and hid my face in my hands; for I was sad at heart, and could not speak.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ARRIVAL AT ST. LOUIS.—THE BULWER FAMILY

“THE water was high, and the canoes flew along the stream like a bird; so that, notwithstanding the numerous windings of the river, we made the trip in less than half the time which would have been required by land. The journey was marred by no accident or untoward event.

“During the passage, I made the acquaintance of a Mr. Bulwer, the director of a great fur-trading company at St. Louis. To him I had related my adventures, and he questioned me as to my plans for the future. I replied, that my intention was to return to my country as soon as a favorable opportunity should offer. But he immediately answered that I was wrong.

“‘For,’ said he, ‘what will you do in Germany? You have no trade, and at twenty years of age you will become a charge to the baron. You have no taste for

a military career, nor for the sea. What then will you do? You will one day regret your lost time. Your vocation calls you to an adventurous life. Believe me: follow it. You have lived three years with the Aricaras. You know not only their language, but you have learned enough of that of the Sioux and Pawnees to be able to enter into commerce with them. You are accustomed to the life and privations of the redskins, which gives you a great advantage over other traders, even over the Canadians. You will always be welcome in the tribe which so long counted you as one of its best warriors; and the advantage to be derived from that will be very great for your fur-trade. Believe my experience: work. Never expect from others the living which you can procure for yourself. I offer you a post in my company. There is no necessity for being in a hurry to give me an answer. Think it over. Reflect seriously upon the advice which I have volunteered to you, and if, in one week from this time, your intention should remain settled to return to Germany, I will do every thing in my power to find a chance for you to get a passage home.'

"With these words Mr. Bulwer left me; and I saw that he did not wish to carry the conversation any further at this time. Nor, indeed, did he once again allude to it during the remainder of our journey to St. Louis.

His advice caused me much serious reflection. It agreed exactly with all that I had been taught from my earliest years. The good old soldier, to whom, in all probability, I owed my existence, who had bestowed upon me the care and solicitude the most tender parent may lavish upon his child, until his last hour, had always exhorted me to work for myself, as every honest man should do. In later years, the baron had given me the same advice; and now, in a strange land, far from my protectors, I was happy enough to meet with a man of standing in the world, who might seem as if sent to me by God to keep my feet from swerving from the straight path of duty, and assist me in carving out my own way by straightforward toil and honest courage.

“My resolution was, accordingly, soon taken. I went to him on the following day to announce that I accepted his offer.

“Pressing my hand warmly, he expressed his own satisfaction, as well as praised my resolution, and installed me, on my arrival at St. Louis, at once in his house. Here I was treated, both by himself and his excellent wife, more as a near relative than as a stranger. This was, in all probability, due to my youth; but, whether so or not, I am happy to say that I never forfeited their kindness by ingratitude or self-will.

“My first necessity was, of course, in dressing my-

self like the rest of those around me; for my clothing, which was a mixture of the Indian and trapper style of dress, was scarcely fitted for one who stood in a city, which, although then upon the outskirts of civilization, possessed a large and wealthy population. In this Mr. Bulwer very kindly assisted me. I had proposed turning a portion of my furs at once into money. He, however, would not hear of this, but advised me to wait until some of the Southern dealers in skins should visit the place. To enable me to do this, he advanced me a sum more than sufficient to serve my purposes; and, in a few days, I was gratified by the warm and motherly compliments which Mrs. Bulwer bestowed upon the change in my personal appearance.

"However, we are never altogether contented: and I began to think much of Lewis.

"We had shared so much of good and bad fortune together, that it caused me much sorrow to reflect upon our possible separation. It appeared to me almost impossible that I could endure to be placed in a situation entirely separated from the ways and means of life of my old friend. Consequently, one day I plucked up sufficient courage to request Mr. Bulwer to be good enough to employ my friend also, if he had any opportunity at his disposal of doing so.

"The worthy merchant, who had from the very first seen the excellent qualities of the honest trapper, and

judged correctly how worthy he was of esteem and confidence, told me that he had already considered the possibility of such a request upon my part, and that he had decided upon gratifying it; not merely upon the score of pleasing me, but because he was certain that, in many respects, Lewis would be invaluable to him.

“Accordingly, but a few days had passed when he sent for Lewis, and, telling him that the account which I had given of my adventures in his company had impressed himself with a high opinion of his ability for a life on the frontier, offered him a post as manager on the Upper Mississippi, which then chanced to be vacant.

“This proposition was accepted with very great pleasure by my friend. The post had a double advantage in his eyes. It was not too far from St. Louis for frequent intercourse with me, while, being on the limits of the Indian lands, and close to the prairies, it would allow him occasionally to gratify his love of hunting.

“It was some two months after my installation in Mr. Bulwer’s family, that a vessel arrived at St. Louis from New Orleans, to purchase furs. My patron introduced me to the captain, and I profited by this opportunity to sell very advantageously those which the Indians had given me; in which business I was not slightly indebted to the tact and knowledge of Mr. Bulwer.

“As the captain proposed sailing from New Orleans to New York, I intrusted him with letters for the baron and Stanislas. In these, I announced my determination not to think of returning to Europe until my fortune should be ample enough to secure future comfort. I renewed the expressions of my sentiments of filial gratitude to the baron, and love for Stanislas. To the latter, I sent one of the splendid horses which the Aricaras had given me, as well as the complete equipment of a redskin. Nor did I forget the little Bertha, of whom I then thought merely as a child. To her, I addressed a packing-case, filled with some of my finest furs, feathers, shells, and other things, which were chiefly valuable as rare curiosities, at that period, in Germany.

“I was now completely ready to commence the life to which Mr. Bulwer had recommended me to devote myself. However, as he informed me, it was not the season in which a successful journey could be made. I therefore occupied myself almost entirely in reading and study.”

CHAPTER XXV.

NEWS FROM GERMANY.—VISIT TO THE ARICARAS.—
A BUFFALO-HUNT.

“IT was some seven or eight months after, that I had the happiness of receiving letters from the place which I still regarded as my home. In the one which had been written by the baron, he expressed his satisfaction at my resolution, and warmly praised my courage, and determination to render myself independent. ‘It is,’ he wrote, ‘the only way to deserve, and therefore to insure, success in life. Nor will you fail, if you walk uprightly, and put your entire trust in that Providence which has hitherto preserved you through so many dangers and perils.’ As for Stanislas, he also praised my determination, envying my happiness in seeing so many curious things. He thanked me for my presents, as did also Bertha, he begged to assure me; concluding by assuring me that the horse I

had sent him had come to hand in perfect safety, and was now a subject of admiration for the whole regiment in which he bore a commission. Indeed, he told me that the son of the Elector of Hesse-Darmstadt had offered him fifteen hundred florins for it, 'which, of course, my dear William, I declined taking.'

"About three months later, for the first time, I revisited the Aricaras.

"I must honestly say, that it was not without deep emotion that I again entered the village of the tribe in which I had been admitted as a brother.

"Nor did the Aricaras themselves, in spite of the Indian habit of generally controlling the external exhibition of their feelings, entirely suppress their joy at again seeing me. The Great Eagle himself apparently laid aside the usual Indian phlegm, which I had so repeatedly noticed in his whole bearing and manner, and embraced me, as though I had been an only and beloved son brought back to him from death.

"Moreover, immediately after they had received me, I was escorted in triumph to my ancient hut.

"This, through a delicacy of sentiment which is but rarely found among civilized people, had been uninhabited since my departure, although kept scrupulously in good order; the Aricaras not desiring that any one but myself should dwell within it.

"I remained amongst them for nearly a month.

This was not merely on business. The matters connected with that portion of my visit were soon terminated. The Aricaras, indeed, were so delighted with again seeing me, that they let me have, without any objection, all the furs and horses which I needed, upon my own terms; which, it is scarcely necessary to say, were fair and even liberal. Indeed, in more than one instance, they wished to force upon me the horses I desired, as gifts. This is mentioned by me for the purpose of showing that the red man is by no means so mercenary as the Indian traders commonly paint him. On the contrary, where his affections are awakened, he not infrequently exhibits a liberality and nobility of character which might put his white brother to the blush.

“After my business was, however, concluded, the chiefs and principal men of the tribe designed to give me the pleasure of a great buffalo-hunt. This time, it was decided that they should employ the lasso.

“On a pleasant morning, at the commencement of May, we accordingly set out, mounted on the best horses of the tribe, and numbering in our party every chief and warrior of any note that could be found among the Aricaras. After travelling for three days, we at last reached the borders of an immense prairie, and saw almost directly before us a large herd of buffaloes. These animals were feeding, and, as heedless

as ever, looked quietly at us, without being in the least disturbed by our approach.

“The Great Eagle commanded a halt, and divided his warriors into two parties, one of which he kept with himself. The other had been, with true Indian politeness, offered to me; but, on my declining to take charge of it, which had evidently been expected, was assigned to the Fox. This party immediately galloped off to flank the herd, and then our party gradually closed in upon them.

“When we had arrived pretty near them, the buffaloes began to seem uneasy; and an antelope, which started from their midst at full speed, gave the alarm to them. They tossed their heads, uttering sounds like low and muttering thunder. Then they also started. The very earth seemed to shake beneath their tread. It was a grand thing to one unaccustomed to it, to behold such a throng of wild animals in hurried flight.

“We had, however, participated in the sport a hundred times, and were only stirred to new ardor by it. Preparing the lasso above our heads, we pushed our horses to a gallop.

“As often as we came near to a fine animal, the lasso was sent, with its balls whistling through the air, by the hand of the hunter. It rolled itself around the horns or legs of the animal. The poor brute, affrighted by the entanglement to which it was unaccustomed, in

vain essayed to free itself. The thongs only drew themselves tighter and more closely around it. In its fright or its rage, it would bellow loudly, and quicken its wild flight; but as it fled the thongs tightened, until at length it rolled helplessly upon the earth, where the lance or the tomahawk soon despatched it.

This sport requires great coolness and address, and even, more especially, great skill. The reason of this is that the buffaloes, rendered furious by the sight of blood, and maddened by the bellowing of their lassoed and wounded companions, run in every direction.

“Woe, then, to the hunter who chances to find himself in their infuriated path.

“Himself and his horse are quickly thrown to the earth by the fierce rush of the savage brute, when they are either ripped up by its keen horns, or crushed beneath its heavy feet. It is, indeed, seldom that one or both of them are not grievously wounded; and, in many cases, the hapless Indian is borne home by his kinsmen or companions, either dead or dying.

“We, however, had this day no accident to deplore, and it closed as gayly and joyously as it had commenced; our party having killed eight buffaloes, and that led by the Fox having slaughtered eleven, or nineteen in all.

“After skinning and cutting up three of the dead animals, fireplaces, or rather cooking-holes, were pre-

pared in a manner, which, I believe, is peculiar to the Aricaras alone of the Indian tribes.

“A deep hole was excavated in the earth, in which a fire was kindled, prepared with dried branches, leaves, and turf. Upon this burning or smouldering mass, the joint of buffalo-beef was placed. This was again covered with dry branches and turf, which slowly ignite from the stealthy fire below; and, in about twenty minutes, the joint is broiled, as its Indian cook conceives, fit for his own palate. The cinder is then removed from above it. Having been taken from the hole, its exterior and blackened portion is scraped off. Supposing that the hunter may not be averse to meat which will be somewhat underdone, he can then sit down to a dinner which, hastily as it may have been cooked, has seldom if ever been rivalled.

“Upon finishing our meal, we threw ourselves upon the earth, and slept soundly, guards having been posted by the Great Eagle around the spot to secure our slumbers from the possible intrusion of enemies.”

CHAPTER XXVI.

MY PROPOSED VISIT TO NEW ORLEANS.

“It was but a few days after my return from the hunting-grounds to the village of the Aricaras, that I, with the whole of my party, bade them ‘farewell.’ We then departed for our homes, or rather I did to the temporary home which I now had with Mr. Bulwer in the Great West, as the Americans near the Atlantic were then, and are now, as I understand, accustomed to call the whole of that portion of their country which then lay upon the very verge of civilization.

“On my arrival at St. Louis, I was received by himself and his good wife with open arms,—indeed, I was treated more by them as a son than as a stranger,—and, when I displayed to Mr. Bulwer the results of my visit to my Indian friends, he expressed himself more than pleased.

“He informed me that I had more than justified the

opinion which he had entertained of my sagacity, and said, that if he had previously doubted, in the slightest degree, my success, this doubt was now entirely removed. From one of the hunters who had accompanied me on my expedition, I heard that he affirmed my furs to be both the most numerous and the most valuable which had been brought into St. Louis during many seasons. This I knew that they must be. Seldom, indeed, was it that the Indian trade was opened under such good auspices as it had been by me. Nevertheless, Mr. Bulwer's opinion was by so much the more agreeable as, fatherly though his conduct almost invariably was, he was somewhat chary of eulogy in every instance that was in the remotest degree connected with business. This was, of course, upon the principle which is common to most mercantile men, whether they reside in the United States, or in any other section of the civilized world,—I mean that indisposition to acknowledge merit in the young, which is so universally shared by almost all mercantile men.

“His opinion, however, stimulated me to new exertion. This it did by setting before mine eyes more visibly, that reward, which, by God's providence, I might, not altogether unreasonably, hope to obtain. It was for this reason that I prepared myself for a more unremitting assiduity to the calling in which I had at his suggestion embarked.

“For more than four years, therefore, I continued to visit the Aricaras towards the close of the hunting-season.

“During this period, I began to acquire a considerable reputation in the fur-trade, while the horses which I brought back with me upon each trip were to the full as valuable to me, or even more valuable in proportion to their number.

“It must be remembered that a large proportion of each year was comparatively unoccupied. I had, therefore, some seven months in which my business by no means weighed upon me, and after a time it struck me forcibly, that excepting the period actually engaged in my transit to and from my Indian friends, with my annual sojourn amongst them, and some three weeks about the period in the spring when the dealers in furs visited St. Louis, my existence was comparatively useless.

“Certainly I read, and read a good deal. But it must be remembered that I was still young, and that my previous life had been a busy and adventurous one. Consequently, I needed action.

“What necessity could there be, I inquired of myself, for my transacting my affairs, on the disposal of my yearly stock, with the agents who visited St. Louis? Why should I not repair myself to New Orleans or New York, and examine the market? The more I

thought over this, the more convinced did I become that this was desirable. Should I do so, I knew that I could obtain a more thorough knowledge of the value of the articles which I had to dispose of, and might very probably open to myself other channels which might increase their value to me.

"This I suggested to Mr. Bulwer, when we were seated in his parlor, one evening, alone. He for some time listened to my arguments in silence.

"At length, he inquired of me, what I proposed to myself beyond the pleasure of the trip and the gratification of a love of excitement.

"‘My good sir,’ I replied, feeling somewhat annoyed by the slighting manner in which his question had been shaped, ‘I propose to myself, in the first place, to escape the six or seven months of idleness which I now pass in St. Louis. Even should I fail in improving the market for our goods, I shall, at all events, increase my knowledge of the world.’

"‘That is very true.’

"‘If so,’ I continued, ‘whether I acquire a better pecuniary position or not, I shall most certainly be considerably benefitted.’

"‘That may be doubted,’ was the grave response made to me by Mr. Bulwer.

"‘How so?’ I asked, in a tone which, it may be presumed, betrayed what I felt.

“Do not be annoyed, William,” he said. “Did I not know you as well as I do, I should unhesitatingly protest against such youth as yours is, so impulsive and fresh, running the risk of contamination in a large city. Small as New York and New Orleans then were, in proportion to their present size, it must be remembered that they were two of the largest cities on the North-American continent. ‘In New Orleans, indeed, the Creole population, with its French descent, from its ancestry, and the enervating climate under which it lives, has contracted a most pernicious laxity in its moral life. I have myself lived amongst its inhabitants some three years.’ As he said this, he sighed deeply. ‘If you are certain that you can endure temptation of every kind, without yielding, obey your inclination. If not my dear William, it would be far better for you to remain among your friends, and trust your affairs in the hands of the regular factors who visit us.’

“As he concluded, he veiled his brow with his right hand, and appeared to be lost in thought.”



CHAPTER XXVII.

COMMENCEMENT OF MR. BULWER'S STORY.

“FOR several moments I refrained from breaking the silence, being occupied in reflecting upon that which my good friend had said. It was now for a considerable time that I had known Mr. Bulwer as intimately as it is possible for any very young man to know one who in age has so many years the advantage of him; yet this was the first time that I had heard the name of New Orleans cross his tongue in other than a purely business connection. Let me frankly own it, my curiosity was strongly awakened by the melancholy tone in which he had spoken, as by well as the emphatic words of condemnation that he had just employed.

“At length, I ventured, when sufficiently assured, to ask him how long it might have been since he was last in that city?

“‘Some thirty-four years.’

“‘And your recollections of it are then disagreeable, sir?’ I said in an inquiring tone.

“‘I will tell you how it was that I came to quit it forever,’ he replied, with as sharp a manner and accent as his kindly voice was capable of assuming; ‘then you can judge for yourself with how great a love I regard it.’ When he saw my look of pain at his strangely changed tone, he extended his hand, and laid it gently upon my arm. ‘Forgive me, William,’ he said softly, ‘for my quick and abrupt manner. There are some things which we can none of us think of without pain. The three years of which I have spoken contain the misery of my whole life. What wonder is it that I am unable to recall them without having my tongue sharpen, and my mouth parch, as I am speaking!’

“After a brief pause, he again resumed.

“As the night gradually stole upon us, both became so deeply interested, he in telling, and I in listening to, his strange tale, that neither of us took any note of time. The lamp was unlit by which we were accustomed to sit; and when it ended, save that the moon had arisen, the darkness would have been complete.

“It would be well-nigh impossible for me to recall the exact words in which the story of those three years was given.

“Therefore it may perhaps be better, if I myself

should put it into shape, and give it a complete connection. This, the more especially, as it was much broken up by personal comments in its delivery. Indeed, a portion of its conclusion was afterwards recounted to me by Mrs. Bulwer, her husband having been too modest to give me the whole of the details, reflecting, as they did, so much credit upon himself.

“At the time when Mr. Bulwer first visited what has subsequently been named the Crescent City, he was a comparative boy. His father was at that period a tolerably thriving merchant in New York, in which city he had resided for the preceding quarter of a century. How he came to send his boy to the capital of the then French province of Louisiana was in itself sufficiently singular. A French Creole who had a sugar plantation on the Mississippi, some dozen or more miles above New Orleans, had, several years previously, by the usual, or perhaps I ought only to say, by the too frequent, improvidence of the planters of those times, ruined himself. He subsequently died in New Orleans, partly by intemperance, and partly from grief over the destitution in which he had placed his wife and his only son. Shortly after, his wife also died. It was said at the time that she had fallen into a decline, consequent upon the change in her condition. It is at least as probable from what Mr. Bulwer told me, that she died of that grief, which we too commonly call a

broken heart, resulting upon the knowledge; but I must not anticipate my story.

“At the time of his father’s death, M. Eugene de Lessaix was barely twenty-three.

“He was handsome, a good linguist, and indefatigable in the pursuit of any thing, whether it was pleasure or business, which he might undertake. A few days subsequently to the burial of the deceased, he had a long interview with his mother. What passed between them was never known; but some three weeks afterwards he sailed for Rio Janeiro, with the avowed intention of seeking his fortune.

“Through a Spanish banker in New Orleans, Madame de Lessaix received, some six months later, a large sum of money from him. This she declined to use, and subsequently, scarcely more than a year afterwards, Eugene de Lessaix was the only one of his family left alive.

“In some two years after this, he returned to New Orleans, much bronzed, as a man might be who had been roughing it on the *pampas*, or who had worked before the mast. He was, however, or, at all events, seemed to be so, a wealthy man.

“He entered into the tobacco and sugar business in that city. Like most of the Creole merchants of that period, however, he by no means confined himself to these staples. In his warerooms almost any thing

that was an article of luxury or value might be met with.

"It so happened that a vessel in which M. Lessaix had visited, or said that he had visited, France, was wrecked upon its return.

"He was the only person saved, having been picked up, lashed to a broken spar, by 'The Mary Anne,' a brig bound to New York, when on its return from Marseilles. This brig belonged to the parent of Mr. Bulwer.

"It is more properly at this point that my good friend's story really begins.

"Nothing could well be more natural, than, at his arrival at New York, he should visit the gentleman by whose crew he had been rescued from death. It may not have been so necessarily natural, that he should have, so rapidly as he did, become intimate with him. But M. Lessaix was, to all appearance, an honorable, as he most decidedly was a highly cultivated and engaging person. In consequence, there is really little occasion for surprise.

"Apparently, M. Lessaix took a great fancy for my friend, at that period little more than a boy. He was then scarcely past his eighteenth year. In an even shorter space of time than it had taken the Creole to acquire the friendship of the father, he became far more intimate with the son.

“The Creole, as I have already said, was an excellent linguist. He spoke English, as Mr. Bulwer told me, with remarkable purity and elegance. The boy was at this time by his father’s desire, studying French. Here was another reason to facilitate their intimacy, and to induce the old man to promote it as much as he possibly could. At this time also, the boy was by no means so staid and tranquil as he had been as a man, and, indeed, as I had always seen him. He was, most undoubtedly, innocently free from all vicious tendencies; but he was sprightly, and fond of gayety. There could necessarily be but little doubt, that when he saw his own gayety and sprightliness reproduced by an older man than himself, with a grace and ease of manner to which he could present no pretension, as well as with the superadded charm of perfect breeding, he should become completely fascinated.

“The result of this may be easily imagined.

“Some five months had passed before M. Lessaix could return direct to New Orleans. It had been noticed with but little astonishment that he had cashed a large draft on his house through the Portuguese consul, although it might have been supposed that he would have naturally had recourse to the consul of his own nation. It had also been remarked that he had found no difficulty in doing so. This, of course, was attributed to his direct mercantile connection with

Brazil, at that time a Portuguese dependency. At length, a large schooner was to sail for Havana, and from Havana an easy chance might be found for his return. The schooner was laden with a valuable cargo. She was to sail from Cuba for Rio, and M. Lessaix saw the captain of the vessel, and made arrangements with him for his own passage to Havana.

“This was about a week before the day on which the schooner was to leave New York, and, in the afternoon, the father of Mr. Bulwer summoned his son into his counting-house, and told him that he had made arrangements with his new friend for the boy to pass the following two years in New Orleans as a clerk to M. Lessaix. This decision was urged upon him by the wish that young Bulwer should enlarge his experience. It is needless to say, that, with the exception of the natural regret at parting from his parents, this determination was received by his son with unfeigned pleasure.”



CHAPTER XXVIII.

MR. BULWER AT HAVANA. — M. LESSAIX.

“ACCORDINGLY, the boy sailed with his new friend for the South, and reached Havana in safety. It was some three weeks before a chance arrived for their crossing the Gulf to New Orleans, and he felt some surprise at the almost universal deference which was offered to his employer.

“Moreover, that employer’s manners had almost imperceptibly changed towards him; a change which he attributed to the difference between their past and present positions with regard to each other. Although as friendly as before, M. Lessaix did not associate with him as much or as freely as he had previously done. In short, he let him feel that this friendliness must in his case, be regarded as exceptional, or, at all events, as an unusual kindness, to one who had no right to look for it.

“One day in especial, he entered the apartment of M. Lessaix, at the hotel where they were stopping, very suddenly. He was talking with a bearded and stalwart naval officer, although the young man could not tell from his rich and tawdry uniform to what nation he belonged; and these were the words he heard on entering the room. The officer was speaking in the English tongue. He was apparently a native of Great Britain, if any judgment could be formed from his accent; but this, young Bulwer afterwards doubted, as he spoke with equal ease, Spanish, when they changed the language in which they had been conversing.

“‘And what shall I do with the coffee and spice, captain?’

“M. Lessaix answered sharply and imperatively, ‘Store them in Martinique. As for the money’—While saying this, his eye fell upon the boy. For a moment a savage frown covered his face, and the involuntary intruder shrank back. However, in the next moment it had passed, and his usual pleasant smile rose to his lips. ‘Come in, *mon ami*,’ he said, ‘we were only talking on business.’ As he uttered these words, his glance turned to his companion, who had retired a step, and had thrust his hand into the bosom of his richly laced waistcoat. A few fierce Spanish words were spoken by him, to which an even more angry reply was apparently returned. Then M. Les-

saix rose, and, with what appeared to young Bulwer an abrupt order, pointed to the door of the apartment. The sailor looked defiantly from him to the boy for a moment; then he seemed suddenly to remember himself, and with a low bow to the one, and a sharp, short nod to the other, retired from the room.

“As he did so, Lessaix turned to Mr. Bulwer.

“‘It is an unpleasant thing, *mon cher*,’ he slowly laughed out, ‘to have business with this sort of person. If we are disposed to defer it, they seem personally to resent it. It is the old Catalan blood, that is always boiling.’

“The lad here ventured to say, that he had thought his companion was an Englishman.

“‘No: a Spanish Creole, my child,’ he said caressingly. Then, passing his arm around the boy’s neck, he drew him gently towards the door. ‘If our *volante* has arrived, we will go and take our evening’s drive around the Prado.’ The carriage to which he alluded was, at that time, the only vehicle employed by the wealthier Havanese for pleasure. It consisted of a large body, with seats for two persons; although very commonly three ladies might be seen riding in one of them. This body was supported upon two large wheels, and was generally drawn by a single fine horse between its two long shafts. Sometimes, however, a second horse or mule is attached on the left side of one

of the shafts, somewhat in advance of the animal on which rides the postilion, who is invariably a negro.

“In a very short time, Mr. Bulwer had forgotten this incident, although subsequent circumstances recalled it to him : this the more readily, as in a few days they set sail for New Orleans, in a vessel belonging to M. Lessaix, which was then on its return to that city from Rio.

“The young man had of necessity seen much of the mercantile marine in the port of New York ; but he was astonished at the greater neatness and precision exhibited in all the details on board ‘The Rover.’ Besides this, her crew seemed to be unusually large. One morning, however, his friend explained to him that there was so much piracy on the coast of South America, that he was obliged to man his trading vessels largely, as well as to send them out sufficiently armed. In this he alluded to the four brass carronades which the schooner carried. It would be needless to say that the lad implicitly credited this assertion.”

CHAPTER XXIX.

LOVE, PIRACY, AND A LITTLE KIDNAPPING.

“ON their arrival at New Orleans, after the first week had passed, the lad settled down very naturally and easily into the position of second clerk at the wholesale and retail warehouse which M. Lessaix had on the *levee*, or wharf, which runs along that city where it touches the Mississippi.

“The extent of business done there was very large, and the goods sold were very various, — tobacco, coffee, and sugar from the West Indies, spices and cocoa from Brazil, silks and laces from France, velvets from Venice, jewelry from England, France, and Holland, tea from China, indigo from the East; and, indeed, almost every variety of valuable or choice merchandise might be found in his warerooms.

“At first the young man had not noticed that no goods were consigned direct to the house; but, in the

second year that he was with M. Lessaix, he began to remark this. The accounts of the house were only for goods sold. Upon observing this fact to the principal clerk, an elderly man, who appeared to have some share in the business, and was of a very uncommunicative nature, he received a reply which struck him as very singular.

“‘The business of M. Lessaix,’ said the clerk, ‘is, my good young gentleman, chiefly dependent upon the contraband trade.’

“‘But the contraband goods must be received,’ replied young Bulwer.

“‘So they are.’

“‘But where?’

“‘My dear young friend,’ uttered his grave superior in the house, ‘let me give you a hint, not to ask that question from M. Lessaix.’

“‘And why? he has always told me to apply to him for any information.’

“‘He, he, he!’ chuckled the clerk. ‘Not about himself,—not about himself.’ As he said this, he thrust his long, lean forefinger into the side of the lad, with a rapidity and vigor that almost took away his breath. Then he chuckled again, turned abruptly from him, and would not utter another word.

“In addition to this, M. Lessaix was very frequently away from his business. Once he had been absent for

more than five months. He had probably been engaged in a voyage,—running in more contraband goods, as his second clerk thought; yet that clerk was somewhat astonished to see, on his employer's return, that his brow was seamed on the left side by what appeared to be a sabre-cut.

“We were nearly taken by pirates, *mon cher*, when we were about two days out from Jamaica. This is the remembrance they left me.”

“On Mr. Bulwer's asking him the particulars, these were given in a sufficiently vague and general manner to produce the impression that they might not precisely be altogether true. However, at this time the young man had no apparent reason to suspect his employer of being engaged in the illegal calling he really pursued. Consequently, his reply left no very durable impression upon the lad's mind.

“It was shortly after this that he became acquainted with his present wife. Indeed, to this acquaintanceship he attributed the fact that he had not gradually given himself up more completely to the influence which M. Lessaix had, since their first knowledge of each other, acquired over him.

“She was the daughter of an English produce-dealer, who had been settled for a length of time in the city. During the last seven years, he had been the English consul at that port. At that time it was not,

in a pecuniary point of view, a post of any very great importance; but it gave him some standing in the higher classes of the city, who, although sharing in the dislike of their own nation for his, respected his commercial probity, and had a high opinion of his general intelligence.

“At first, he had seemed disposed not to encourage young Bulwer’s advances towards intimacy, but, probably after some inquiry into his position in the world, had become convinced that he might safely admit him to his fireside.

“Then some one or two months passed, and Mr. Bulwer found himself recognized in the family as a welcome suitor to their daughter.

“He had written to his father; and, after a fair time had elapsed for his parents to ascertain the position of Mr. Bishop, and the character he bore in New Orleans, his father replied, approving his choice. At the same time, he wrote a lengthy letter to Mr. Bishop, to which, on receiving it, the latter did not allude for several days.

“At length, one evening, when young Bulwer called at the house of Mr. Bishop, he found the daughter out, or was informed that she was. He was also told by the negro servant that his ‘massa’ wished to see him alone. Accordingly, he went into the private office of the English consul, with a degree of timidity which

was only removed by the cordiality with which that gentleman welcomed him.

“‘Sit down, my dear Bulwer,’ said the consul. ‘I have a good deal to say which ought to be told you. When I first received your father’s letter, I had determined to let matters take the course which he had marked out. However, upon reflection, I think it better to be perfectly candid. Therefore let me tell you, that it is through my agency that you are recalled to New York.’

“‘Mr. Bulwer was completely astonished.

“‘My dear sir,’ he at length said, ‘let me assure you, that I have not been summoned home by my father.’

“‘It was now Mr. Bishop’s turn to exhibit surprise.

“‘How?’ he inquired. ‘Has M. Lessaix said nothing to you upon the subject?’

“‘Not a word, sir.’

“‘Mr. Bishop was silent for several moments. Then he said reflectively, ‘But he will, he *must*, do so in the next few days.’

“‘And why, may I ask, Mr. Bishop,’ asked the young man, with a look and in a tone which betrayed how much he felt hurt, both on his own account and that of his employer, at such a step, ‘did you recommend my father to call me back?’

“‘For reasons which were with me, my son, matters of imperative necessity. Until I had permitted

you to enter upon this engagement with Jenny, it was of little difference to me where you might be employed. Now, my dear boy, it matters much.'

"'Of course it does,' replied young Bulwer quickly. 'But M. Lessaix, as a merchant' —

"'By no means,' interrupted the English consul gravely, 'bears the highest character amongst those who follow a similar calling.'

"The young man was at first confounded, and then indignant.

"'My good sir,' he said sharply, 'I have been employed by him for more than two years.'

"'In his sales, only,' was the answer.

"It struck young Bulwer at once, that this was true. He knew not how the goods were purchased, nor whence they came. At the same time, he could not see in what way this fact could compromise so grievously his principal.

"'Well,' he said, 'supposing that he is a smuggler.'

"'My good lad,' replied Mr. Bishop, 'make no mistake. M. Lessaix is no smuggler.'

"'What, then, do you say he is?'

"'I say nothing. But he is suspected of being a pirate.'

"The young man turned pale. He was, at the first moment, disposed to denounce the accusation as an impossibility. But the more he reflected upon it, the

more he found that he was unable to do so. A thousand slight circumstances, which, at the time, he had been unable to explain, returned upon him. All of them bore convincing testimony to the truth of Mr. Bishop's accusation.

“When he left him that night, he was in a state of the most profound regret. To a certain extent he had liked, nay, he had almost loved, M. Lessaix. He knew that piracy, at that period, was not exactly classed with other crimes; yet he also knew that it exposed those who were guilty of it, when caught, to the severest and most degrading form of death. There is, therefore, little to be surprised at in his having determined to warn M. Lessaix of that which he was suspected of.

“He may possibly have supposed that M. Lessaix would have been indignant; but he knew so little of the man as he really was, that he could not have foreseen in how great a trouble he was involving himself.

“On his first speaking to that gentleman, which was done by him with considerable difficulty, M. Lessaix laughed in his face. This annoyed him, and enabled him to speak much more clearly. He accused him of having withheld his father's letter of recall from him, and, finally, very plainly told him of what he was suspected.

“‘Indeed,’ said his employer, after a brief pause, a

dark smile breaking over and clouding his face, 'and if I was?'

"'I should be obliged at once to leave you.'

"'Oh, no! you would not. You are a young man of much better and stronger will than those out of whom life frames her tradesmen and mechanics. For two years, I have had my eye upon you. You are temperate, somewhat cold-blooded,—so much the better. My purpose, boy as you then were, was formed when I first knew you. All I have seen of you lately confirms me in it. You will accompany me to sea the next time that I go. In another year, you shall be my second in command.' Young Bulwer here made a gesture, as if about to interrupt him; but he avoided this by continuing more rapidly, 'What is it that you have hitherto known of life? Simply nothing. I will carry you with me into the tropical seas, where you will revel in a long and sunny paradise of joy and adventure. Every moment will give you a new delight, and you shall wake up from the night's sleep to thank me and nature for having made you a man.'

"Here Mr. Bulwer broke in upon what he was saying by assuring him that such arguments were useless. He bade him reflect upon what must be the termination of his own career. M. Lessaix laughed at him, and, calling him a boy, adduced argument after argument to gain his consent. 'Luckily,' as my friend

said, his conviction of the uprightness of Providence, and his love for his present wife, saved him from giving way to the half entreaty and half command, which was so persistently urged upon him.

“It was ultimately agreed upon between them, that the young man should return to New York as soon as possible.

“That night, however, his employer insisted upon his supping with him. Whether the coffee of which he partook was drugged, he did not know; but when he awoke, late on the following day, he found himself on a cot in the cabin of the schooner on which he had originally arrived in New Orleans. She was moving with a swift breeze down one of the many channels in the delta of the Mississippi.

“Some three hours later, he was in the Gulf of Mexico.”

CHAPTER XXX.

SHARKS AND PIRATES.—THE PURSUIT.—THE DEATH OF M. LESSAIX.

“It would be useless here to recount all that young Bulwer said or did. Remonstrances, prayers, and threats were alike of no avail to procure the pity, or influence the fears, of those who had the charge of him; for he soon discovered that M. Lessaix was not on board.

“The officer in command was the same I have already mentioned that the young man had seen while upon his brief visit to the island of Cuba.

“‘Hark ye, my lad!’ he at length roughly said, as his prisoner was expressing his indignation. ‘It is very lucky for you that the captain marked you safe for this trip, in the log-book, or’—here he uttered a fierce oath—‘you might count on it, that I should make short work with you. At any rate, if not I, I can promise you that yonder blue-fins should.’ In making this

menace, he extended his finger, pointing significantly in the direction where, from time to time, three or four sharks in the wake of the vessel might be seen glancing through the limpid waves in the gorgeous light of the morning sun of the tropics.

“These huge and destructive fish, the tigers of the ocean, may not unfrequently be seen following in the course of a sailing craft, waiting for the offal which may be thrown out; and woe to the luckless sailor who may chance at such times to fall overboard. There is a flash through the waters; the pale stomach of the terrible fish glistens near the surface in the light as he turns upon his side to seize the victim; then the huge jaws snap, and a purple streak appears on the glittering waves, which gradually widens. Perchance the scream of a dying man has been heard, and perhaps not; but all is over.

“Consequently the threat was by no means a pleasant one, and what with the young man’s passionate regrets for his enforced absence from his betrothed, and his indignation with his employer, he passed, as may be reasonably supposed, a remarkably unpleasant six days before he arrived at his destination.

“In the mean time, his disappearance had awakened suspicion; and although M. Lessaix had joined actively in the search for him, and loudly in the protestations of sorrow and regret raised throughout the city, in

which young Bulwer was much liked, he could not do away with Mr. Bishop's belief that he was implicated in it. Luckily a vessel was in port at the time in which Mr. Bishop owned, in conjunction with an American firm, one part. It was a very rapid sailer, and was tolerably heavily armed. There was in addition an American frigate, at the time, which was known to be lying off the mouth of the Mississippi for the purpose of protecting the commerce of the young republic from the piracy in the gulf. To the captain of this frigate, the English consul wrote a strong letter, representing the fact that an American citizen had been abducted from New Orleans, and, as he believed, by one of the most notorious pirates then infesting those waters, commonly known as Capt. Jacques Torreau. He acknowledged that he could not prove M. Lessaix and Jacques Torreau to be one and the same person. He, however, strongly suspected this to be the case. In consequence, he urgently begged the American captain to co-operate with him in following M. Lessaix should he leave New Orleans, stating, that, otherwise, he should be compelled to follow him himself, with only the vessel to which I have already alluded.

"This letter he sent down the river by a pilot-vessel, with orders to cruise until it found the frigate.

"As Providence dictated that it should be, the frigate was encountered immediately off the eastern

channel in the Balize; nor was this answer of the captain other than it might have been supposed any American official would have returned in a similar case.

"Meanwhile Mr. Bishop increased the crew of his own vessel, and armed them as well as he could, by night, in order to awaken no suspicion.

"Spies were also disposed in the houses around the dwelling and counting-house of M. Lessaix.

"Eight nights after, the French governor having in the interval done nothing to assist their anxiety, word was brought the English consul that M. Lessaix was passing the night in his counting-house.

"Immediately he sent orders to his own vessel to weigh anchor, and drop quietly down the river, leaving its largest boat with a full complement of men, well-armed, under the *levee* some hundred yards below the Frenchman's warehouse. In this boat, he placed his eldest son, Arthur Bishop, as his official position necessarily precluded him from taking any active share in the business.

"It was about half-past eleven o'clock that Capt. Jacques Torreau, for it would be useless any longer to continue calling him by his other name, entered the boat which had been waiting for him, and, following the main channel of the river, quitted New Orleans forever.

"Probably, from his complicity with the French

governor of Louisiana, or his subordinate officials, so long carried out, Capt. Torreau had become careless. However this may have been, from the time at which he had quitted the city, he evidently, from all accounts, did not make the slightest attempt to disguise his movements, until upon reaching the schooner which was in waiting for him at one of the numerous mouths of the Mississippi, and seeing the signals made by order of Mr. Bishop's son to the American frigate, which was lying at no great distance in the offing, he saw that he was pursued, and in another half-hour would have fallen into the trap which had been prepared for him.

"From this moment, he put forth all the resources of his seamanship, which, as young Bishop, himself a good practical sailor, and the American captain afterwards told Mr. Bulwer, were, beyond any doubt, very thorough.

"But I have to return to the prisoner. The place of detention destined for him was beyond a lonely patch of swampy land at the western end of San Domingo. Having shipped her topmasts, and lowered her yards, the vessel was almost entirely hidden by the dense and luxuriant vegetation surrounding the small creek into which she had entered. He himself was then landed, and hurried off some two miles into the interior, with a polite request from his former acquaintance not to attempt an escape.

“‘Otherwise,’ said his very plain-spoken friend, ‘I shall be compelled to check your runaway tendency with a leaden messenger.’

“I need scarcely say that such an intimation, coupled with his complete ignorance of the localities, or the very name of his place of imprisonment, gave his guard an ample security for his remaining in his custody.

“They at length arrived at a small house, which, he was told, belonged to a Spanish planter. It was built in the style then and now so common in the West Indies. The dwelling consisted of one story, surrounding a large court-yard. Windows, extending from the ceiling to the floor, were in all the rooms. But those in the room which was given to him were protected, or rather secured, by long iron bars, as are those in the lower floors of the houses in Havana. As it afterwards turned out, this *ranch*o, as it was called, belonged to his old employer, who here enjoyed a third name.

“Here he remained for over nineteen days, not being allowed to quit his room during that period.

“At the end of this time, he was awaked in the night from his slumbers (for, since his abduction, he had slept very lightly) by the distant sound of a cannonade. It was one of those bright, clear, tropical moonlights, in which every thing within the circle of the moon’s radiance is distinctly visible; and, beyond the dense and

jungly growth on the shore, he saw a small schooner endeavoring to escape to the sea, from the guns of a frigate and a smaller vessel, which were driving her towards the coast. How he knew it, he confessed that he was unable to say, as the distance must have rendered it impossible for the naked eye to detect the colors of the frigate. Nevertheless, Mr. Bulwer was confident that the colors of that ship were his own national stars and stripes; and, falling upon his knees, he prayed long and fervently that Providence would enable her to release him. Strangely enough, he seemed never for one instant to have doubted that this was the object of her commander.

“When he arose, the vessel had disappeared behind a wooded knoll, on the right of the creek.

“He, however, still saw the smoke of the cannonade, and heard the hoarse thunder of the guns, apparently much nearer, until just before daybreak. At this time, the sky had become considerably darker, as it very commonly does in southern latitudes, and he saw the whole horizon suddenly illuminated with a reddish light. At the same moment, a broad, white mass of pyramidal flame rose momentarily beyond the knoll, which disappeared in a dense canopy of smoke. It was followed by the terrible report of an explosion, which shook the beams and rafters of the house in which he was imprisoned, as if it had been an earth-

quake Scarcely five minutes had elapsed when a second explosion took place. This time, it came from the creek; and Mr. Bulwer at once felt certain that his friends had won a complete victory.

“By what instinct he knew not, but he rushed to the door, and attempted to tear it open. To his astonishment, it yielded readily to his efforts. It is probable that the somewhat slight building had been so shaken by the force of the two explosions, that the heavy bolt of the lock had already partially been forced from its hold. However this may have been, he paused not to inquire, but, dashing it hurriedly open, rapidly descended towards the creek.

“In his wild hurry, he thought of nothing but escape, until he found himself amongst a mass of blaspheming and struggling men, beyond which, in the breaking morning-light, he saw the face of young Bishop.

“With a loud cry of joy, he sprung towards him, and, in a moment afterwards, fell to the ground with a shot through his right side.

“His subsequent brother-in-law told him in the course of a few days, when his youthful vitality had returned sufficiently from the prostrating effects of the wound to enable him to converse, that this shot had been fired by Jacques Barbier. This, however, Mr. Bulwer would never believe.

“‘And what became of him?’ I asked.

“‘He died the same night.’

“‘How?’

“‘He was killed within five minutes from my receiving my wound.’

“I was about to have asked him, ‘By whom?’ but the look of pain I saw upon my old friend’s face answered my question, and I forbore. He could not altogether forget the French buccaneer’s previous kindness to him; and Eugene Lessaix, *alias* Jacques Barbier, *alias* somebody else, had been shot down by Mr. Bulwer’s present brother-in-law. Ill as I might think of the dead man, let me own, that I felt this touch of human affection ripen my respect for him who felt it, into something akin to veneration; and when, that night, I bent over, and kissed his hand, as I retired to rest, I felt that Providence had placed me with an upright and kindly man, whose gentle wisdom might look after ‘my out-goings and in-comings’ greatly to my advantage.

“On the next morning, I decided upon abandoning my proposed intention to visit New Orleans; not from any fear of its results to myself, but from my dislike to cause my good friend any increase of anxiety upon my account.”



CHAPTER XXXI.

FAREWELL TO LEWIS. — MY DEPARTURE FOR EUROPE.

“IT was some four years subsequently that I found myself so prosperous, that I was wealthy enough to follow out my own inclinations. These led me to return to Europe, and once again to look upon my dear native land. Accordingly, I spoke of my proposed plan to Mr. Bulwer.

“He listened to me with deep pain. Yet the generous and feeling heart of one who had been almost a father to me would not permit him to make any opposition.

“But I had one friend to whose kindly aid, and, in no small degree, to whose initiation of me into the life of the prairies, I, in great part, owed my fortune; and I felt that I must not leave the country without embracing him, and once more looking upon his bronzed cheek, and frank and earnest eye. Accord-

ingly, I went to pass a few days with Lewis, whom I had frequently seen when he came, once a year, to the city, for the purpose of settling his accounts with his and my good friend; for such Mr. Bulwer had been from the first hour in which we met him.

“On my telling him that it was my purpose to return to Germany, he was deeply affected. He, however, did not say much. His lonely life on the prairies had accustomed him to repress his feelings; and this habit was comparatively unchanged by his recent more common contact with his white brethren.

“‘Well,’ he said, ‘I suppose it is natural that you should go back, and leave me here. You have young friends, not having yet grown out of the age of young friendships. When you again see them, you will very soon forget that the old trapper Lewis ever existed.’

“I assured him that he did me wrong, and that my memory was not one that would prove forgetful of my friends, especially of one who had stood by me, and at whose side I had stood, in so many hours of danger. Throwing myself upon his neck, I do not feel ashamed to say that I literally wept. As for Lewis, disengaging himself from my embrace, he sat down on the stump of a lately felled tree, and buried his face in his hands. When he looked up, his brow was settled again, and he turned to me, saying, —

“‘Let us wander out upon the prairie for the next

six or seven hours. It is but a tame spot compared to those wilds which we have travelled through ; but we shall remember something of the past, when we were fast brothers, and first stood side by side.'

"So saying, he rose; and, taking our rifles, we wandered forth. We were absent for three days from the post.

"On the last day, I told Lewis, that now, when he was settling down, he ought to give himself a wife, and surround himself with a family. We were then standing on the summit of a small knoll, just within sight of the station.

"Lewis smiled grimly.

"'Who,' he asked, 'would think of wedding a scarred and weather-beaten trapper, who could not say soft words, and to whom a woman's heart was like an untrodden prairie that he had never yet crossed.'

"'On the prairie,' I replied, 'you and I, and men like us, can always travel. The North star is a sure guide. We know east and west by the rising and setting sun. There are guides that will lead you to a woman's heart as surely; and, were I of your age, Lewis, it should not be long ere I followed them.'

"A strange laugh broke from his lips when I said this, and we returned together to his dwelling.

"It was late that night when we sought our slumbers; and my last words to him, on wrapping my blanket

around me, were, that my love for him should never be forgotten, and that, chance what might, I should never fail to pray for God's blessing on him, and, I should hope, *on his*.

"'Amen!'" was Lewis's brief answer, as he flung himself on his own resting-place, and composed himself to slumber.

"The following day I pressed his hand for the last time, and, before the sun had risen for one hour, was already several miles upon my return.

"Afterwards I heard from Mr. Bulwer, who was a tolerably faithful correspondent for many years, that Lewis had followed my advice. About a year after my departure, he took to himself a wife. It was an Indian woman whom he wedded, and one who turned out a most excellent helpmate to him. He bought a good-sized farm in the neighborhood of St. Louis, and gave himself up entirely to its cultivation and to the rearing of his two children, who, together with the frank and fearless brow of their father, inherited the black hair and deep-toned eyes of their mother's race.

"Occasionally he will make a month's excursion to his old hunting-grounds; but, with this exception, he is what the Americans would call a thoroughly good settler.

"On my return to St. Louis, I industriously occupied myself in making the preparations for my departure.

But, as the day drew near for me to leave Mr. Bulwer, I must honestly say, my courage almost failed me. That good man and his dear wife could not, like Lewis, maintain a control over their features. Indeed, Mrs. Bulwer's sorrow was so evident, that once or twice I was nearly on the point of breaking my resolution to leave them. On the very morning of my departure, when Mrs. Bulwer embraced me, her husband, taking my hand, said a few words which almost turned my purpose.

“Go, my young friend! May the Lord be with you, and bless you in all you purpose or undertake! Remember, that, should misfortune ever overtake you in your native country, you have friends here who will receive you with gladness. While we live, our affection can never forget you.”

The good man's eyes fairly filled with tears, as he spoke, and his wife cried heartily.

“But at last the love of home, and my affectionate remembrance of the baron and Stanislas, prevailed; and, quitting the friends who had been so kind to me, I went on board the vessel in which I had engaged my passage.

“The trip down the river offered little that was remarkable, and I was soon at New Orleans. Here I remained but a few days, so impatient was I to return to Europe, and was soon on the route to Freudenstadt.”



CHAPTER XXXII.

MY RETURN.—THE BARON.

“MY voyage was, in every respect, an agreeable one, although I could only long for its termination, so desirous was I to arrive at my old home. It was a bright and balmy morning in the month of June when we at length reached Hamburg, after a passage of forty-three days; and, in my eagerness once more to look upon the faces which had been so beloved, immediately after the formalities connected with my passport were ended, I employed a servant connected with the principal hotel to procure me a carriage. In about half an hour, it was standing at the door, and I at once started.

“Wishing to enjoy the surprise of the baron, I had not announced my return to him.

“It would be almost impossible for me to describe the emotion I felt as I at length drew near to Freudenstadt. Here was a turn on the road; there it crossed

a little stream by a rude wooden bridge, which had, in my childhood, appeared to me so large and magnificent a structure; here was the country forge, at which I so well remember Smith Hans striking with his heavy hammer the red and glowing iron; and there, at length, were the trees, whose rich green foliage concealed the walls of Wolfenstein. A few yards more, and I saw its fine old walls, and its windows glittering under its battlements in the yellow sunlight. My heart beat violently. Unable to control my feelings, I stopped the driver. Action was necessary to me to alleviate the violence of my emotion. So I preferred to quit the carriage, and walk on, giving him directions to drive on by the road, and await me at the village.

“Every tree and every little knoll by which I passed recalled some adventure of my youth.

“Here I had leaped or run with Stanislas. There I had climbed the knotted stem of an old oak to get a bird’s-nest for little Bertha. A little farther on was the path which I had so often trodden from the humble home of my foster-father, in the direction of the castle. As I reflected on his love for me, and remembered that he was no longer living to welcome me, my thoughts involuntarily saddened. Yes: perhaps I was now to learn some new grief. What might not time and sorrow have wrought in the baron’s once happy household!

“Why is it, that, at the very moment I expected.

happiness, the heart always feels some unwelcome thought intruding its fear and sadness upon it? I can only say that mine was bitterly tried with these gloomy forebodings.

“However, I continued my way, and was soon close to the entrance gate, which stood, as it had usually done in the olden days, hospitably open. Leaning against the wall, I felt almost unable to proceed farther.

“A servant who was passing through the hall, and who appeared astonished at my troubled appearance, advanced towards me, and politely inquired what I needed. My tongue could barely stammer out the name of the baron. He must probably have thought that, in spite of my dress, I was an applicant for assistance; for, with a pleasant smile, although somewhat patronizingly, he said,—

“‘If the gentleman will come with me, I shall have the pleasure of announcing him.’

“With these words, he led me towards the library. At the door he paused.

“‘What name,’ he inquired, ‘shall I have the honor of announcing?’

“My answer to him was, ‘I will announce myself.’ Pushing the astonished domestic aside, I accordingly opened the door, and advanced into the apartment.

“For a moment, the baron turned from the book he had been reading, in one of the deeply embrasured win-

dows, and looked at me with some surprise, not unmixed with a trifle of annoyance, at being so unceremoniously intruded upon. In the next instant, he had risen, and advanced towards me. He was far from recognizing me, and inquired simply in what manner he 'might serve me.' Nor was there any wonder that this was so. The child to whom he had bidden 'farewell' some ten years earlier was now a tall, bronzed, and bearded man of twenty-six years of age, yet looking some five or six years older. My memory, however, was more faithful. I remembered the handsome and stately features on which those ten years had scarcely yet traced an additional wrinkle. Neither had the hair perceptibly whitened; although, as he laughingly told me subsequently, there were streaks of gray in it, which made him avoid strong light when he found himself in the society of ladies, who might possibly take him for his son's elder brother.

"This, nevertheless, occurred afterwards. I was too deeply moved to utter a single word.

"The baron saw my trouble, and, as he informed me later in the evening, sharing the error of his domestic, addressed me in an even kinder tone than he had previously done, reiterating his former question.

"It was impossible any longer to control myself.

"Overcome by my emotion, half-blinded by my tears of joy, scarcely able, through my sobs, to utter the

words that shaped themselves tremblingly upon my tongue, I threw myself into his arms, asking him whether he no longer recognized the little William whom he had once so loved.

“The voice seemed to touch one of the memories that nothing in my personal appearance could possibly do.

“Thrusting me from him, he gazed into my face; and through my speech something had been given him on which memory could build the bridge which should unite the present with the past.

“Again he embraced me, or rather did so in turn (for I must own that the first embrace had been entirely upon my part); and after one or two broken exclamations of pleasure, which he did not attempt to restrain, he turned to the servant, who was standing wide-mouthed in his surprise and astonishment by the open door, and despatched him to seek for Stanislas.”



CHAPTER XXXIII.

MY FIRST DAY AT FREUDENSTADT.

“IT need scarcely be stated, that on his way to the stables for the purpose of saddling a horse, that he might follow Stanislas, who had departed in the morning for a day’s sport (game was plentiful on the baron’s estates), the domestic took occasion to tell the rest of the household, that the little William, of whom he had long since heard amongst the elder ones of them, had returned. Accordingly, in a few moments, while waiting at the side of the baron, I saw the faces of the old butler, and three or four of the principal servants, appearing at the doorway. Their respect for their master prevented them from entering the library unbidden. I was accordingly advancing towards them, when the baron laid his hand upon my arm, and restrained me, bidding them to come in.

“‘Here,’ he said, ‘is the long absent prodigal re-

turned, my friends. Judging by his looks and his size, it may be said that travel has, at any rate, improved his body. May the Lord grant that his mind and heart have improved with his stature, as I little doubt that they have,' added the baron, looking at me with the old, familiar and benign kindness, which I so well remembered, and pressing my hand warmly, which he had taken in his own.

"After returning the cordial pressure which he gave me, I turned, and received the hearty congratulations of the domestics who remembered me; interchanging a few words with all of them.

"While I was thus occupied, a young lady entered the room. It was Bertha.

"Running towards me, she extended both her hands eagerly.

"'Dear William!' she began.

"Then she stopped. A rosy blush suffused her cheeks, and the broad lids sank over her clear, blue eyes. She was far more beautiful than my imagination or memory had ever painted her; and the tender confusion which had checked her utterance to the old playmate who had grown almost out of recollection, even added to her loveliness.

"'Have you nothing else to say to the old friend of your babyhood, my child?' asked her father.

"She did not reply. As for myself, let me own that

a strange diffidence also held me speechless. Her beauty, which I confess I had not expected to find so exquisitely lovely, completely oppressed my sense, and disabled me from finding a word.

“‘And you, too, William! Are you dumb?’ jestingly inquired the baron.

“Bertha, who had now recovered, lifted her face to mine; and, stooping towards her, I pressed a timid salute with my feverish lips upon her brow, without uttering a word.

“This produced a laugh from her father, who said that he had rarely seen so cold a meeting between two old playmates. The observation only added to our mutual confusion. For myself, I was oppressed with a deeper, yet more tender fear than any which I had experienced in my past ten years of adventure. At this moment the gallop of a horse was heard without the castle. The next moment the hoofs of the animal were heard in the castle court-yard, and a voice, which, though now fuller and manlier in its tone, I well remembered, and had remembered in every changing scene of my Western life, rung on my hearing.

“‘Where is he?’

“It was the voice of Stanislas. My embarrassment was, for the moment, completely done away with. Springing towards the doorway, forgetful at the instant, both of the baron and Bertha, I was the next

minute embraced by the vigorous arms of the fine young man, who had bounded up the stairs as I emerged through the door.

“‘Can this be William,—little William,’ he inquired, ‘this huge mass of bone, sinew, and muscle? I shall have to look to my own laurels as a sportsman, when I follow the game with such a competitor near me.’

“While looking at him, I thought I had never seen a nobler and more vigorous specimen of young and hale manhood. His face was almost unchanged, save for the tawny mustache which covered the upper lip. The eyes danced with the same merry life, although somewhat soberer in their expression; and his frame was marked by the same athletic and noble proportions which distinguished that of his sire. Again and again we embraced. We each recalled a thousand incidents of our childhood. He took me to his own chamber, and showed me the trappings of the Indian warrior, which I had sent him years since. These were symmetrically disposed, in the form of a trophy, between the two large windows at the end of the apartment.

“‘The chamber is locked up,’ said Stanislas, ‘when I am away from Wolfenstein. When here, I let no one touch them but myself. The horse you sent me was a noble animal. But he is dead,’ he added grave-

iv. 'He saved my life, and I rewarded him with a tombstone at the place where he did so.'

"On my inquiring into the particulars, it seemed that Stanislas had been hunting the wild boar, while on a visit to some friends in Thuringia, and had been thrown from William's back (he had given the horse my name), not by any fault of the animal, but by his own, as he said. The boar, which he had wounded before this with his rifle, made a charge directly at him, for the purpose of ripping him up with his tusks, when 'the noble brute' (I use the words Stanislas employed) 'rushed between us, and endeavored to seize the boar with its teeth. It was a vain attempt. The tusks of the boar entered its sides. I, however, had now risen, and with my lance avenged my brave preserver. As I saw the dying look of love for its master in its eyes, I could not help thinking, that, had my friend been with me, he would have been to the full as ready to sacrifice his life for mine.'

"As I pressed the hand of Stanislas, he knew that I would have done so.

"Great rejoicings were held that night by the farmers of the domain, over the lost friend (for so I might, without impropriety, call myself), who had been found again.

"After these were terminated, I sat up late, recounting the history of my various adventures to the baron

and Stanislas, as well as to Bertha, who had petitioned for permission to remain. Much as I was pleased by my friend's interest, and his father's, in my narrative, let me own that her breathless attention, and her tears of pity, as I told them the various particulars of my race for life from the Indians, were by far sweeter to my feelings. When I at last retired to my chamber, I must, indeed, frankly confess that my dreams were of Bertha's blue eyes and the moisture which had dimmed them, rather than of either of her male relatives."



CHAPTER XXXIV.

MY LOVE FOR BERTHA.

“ON the following day, I rode out to the chase with Stanislas, who was evidently somewhat curious as to my actual skill as a marksman, and intended to test it.

“It were needless for me to recount how it was that he did this, or to mention that he returned with me in the evening, fully satisfied that the marksmanship of the American prairies is, at any rate, fully equal to any thing that can be done by the Swiss or the Tyrolese. As for himself, he candidly owned that he could not compete with me. When I told him that I had seen Lewis pass a bullet from his rifle through the eye of a hawk, when at its full flight, some hundred yards above us, he told me, but that for my affirming it, he would not have believed it. Let me say that I could scarcely avoid laughing at his half incredulity. Yet it was very natural. He had been used to see men fire whose lives

had not been spent with a rifle on their shoulders,—men to whom the weapon was simply a recreation or a bread-winner, not those to whom it has been for years and years the only safeguard, and perhaps the only true friend,—those to whose hands it is as natural as the pen is to the author, and the printed volume to the student.

“Consequently, I did not reply to him.

“When we returned to the castle, he was enthusiastic in his praises of my skill; and as I saw Bertha’s eyes glisten when he spoke of my shooting, as something marvellous, I began to encourage myself with the hope that I might not prove to be so wholly beyond the charming girl’s affections. Indeed, an ambitious dream had already awakened within me, which as yet I scarcely dared to allow my anticipations to realize.

“Several days were given up by me to the pleasures of my present condition. The presents—furs, and Indian curiosities of every class—which I had brought home with me arrived from Hamburg, and were offered to the baron and Stanislas. The most valuable set of furs I, however, reserved for Bertha.

“Although I felt somewhat diffident in offering them to her, she felt even more diffident in receiving them. As I saw her blushes, in my own mind, I began to believe that I was really not altogether an indifferent object to her heart.

“About two weeks after my return, the baron took an opportunity to speak to me about my future, and asked me what I intended to do.

“I told him that the Lord had abundantly prospered my exertions in the New World, where I had accumulated a considerable fortune, and that it had been my intention to settle down near my friends if I could find an estate within my means. That at present this would be dependent upon circumstances. Nursing a hope which might very probably bear me no fruit, it would be useless to count upon the future. Dearly as I respected him and loved Stanislas, there was something which I scarcely dared own to him.

“‘And what is that, William?’

“‘I replied that — ‘I almost feared to tell him.’

“‘If it is any thing which exclusively concerns yourself,’ he said, ‘I feel so true an interest in your welfare, that I almost believe that I have the right to demand of you that you should tell me.’

“‘Alas!’ was my reply, ‘it not only concerns me, but yourself and Stanislas also, very nearly.’

“‘Then, my boy,—indeed, I may almost call you my son, for such you are by affection if not by blood,—I have the right to know it.’

“‘In my confusion, I told him how I had dared, even in this short space of time, to learn to love Bertha. I owned that I was aware he might dislike

the humility of my extraction. 'But,' I added, with something like pride, 'I have grown to manhood in a land where a man's nobility is measured by the stature of his own soul, rather than by his family name. In America, the blood that makes nobility is our own. Perhaps I have acquired too much of the feeling of the race of freemen with whom I have associated. You may not consider me worthy of receiving the hand of one of your family, even though she may love me. If so, let me go back to the prairie, the trapper, and the Indian; for there, at least, I shall move amongst men who are only my equals.'

"I had spoken hurriedly, although the baron had several times attempted to interrupt me. But my love, when it had for the first time found words, mastered me. Truly, I had not known how overpowering it was; for until this moment I had scarcely had sufficient courage to own it even to myself. When I had, at last, come to a pause, the baron asked me in a somewhat restrained, and, as I fancied, haughty manner, 'whether I had yet spoken to his daughter.'

"'Certainly not,' was my answer, as I drew myself indignantly up to my full height.

"'Then, if so, William, I can only say that you have my full permission to do so whenever you may choose.'

"Falling upon my knees, I passionately kissed his hand.

“‘Mind,’ he continued, ‘I do not profess to be very clever in reading the minds of women. Be certain of one thing, and that is, although I would have chosen you myself for her husband, as I know your nature to be true and honorable, I will in no ways influence her. A father has no right to wed his children according to his fancy, although he would be perfectly right in restraining them from forming an unworthy union.’

“I thanked him again and again for his kindness, and hurried away to seek for Bertha.

“My determination was, to avow my love to her immediately. It must, however, be owned, that, before I met her, diffidence had again taken possession of me. Indeed, three months elapsed before I ventured upon speaking to her; and, had it not been for Stanislas, I should scarcely then have presumed to do so.”

CHAPTER XXXV.

MY MARRIAGE.

“AT last, owing, as I have already said, to the interposition and good offices of my dear friend Stanislas, who, not being the lover, but the brother, of Bertha, felt no bashfulness whatever in the matter, the affair was brought to a crisis.

“It was in the library of the castle, one morning. He appealed to his sister to know what spell she had thrown over me.

“‘When William first came home,’ he said, ‘he was a fine huntsman, a better shot than I am; and no exposure or toil in the pursuit of game could weary him. His life in the backwoods of America had made his muscles hard and strong. His eye was as keen as that of a fox, and his ankle as springy as the feet of the chamois that I chased last autumn in the Tyrol. Now he is slow, his voice has lost its joyous ring, and he

seems to be always lost in a dream. Why, Bertha, surely you are blushing.'

"She protested that her brother was entirely mistaken.

"Well, perhaps so. But what is the matter with William, unless he should be in love? Eh! Why, William is blushing,—and so are you too. There is no mistake about it this time. So, my good friends, I will leave you to settle matters together; for, really, I am beginning to be heartily tired of two lovers who do not seem to understand their own wishes.'

"Saying this, he turned upon his heel, and rushed out of the library.

"Bertha had reddened all over, and would have followed him. Perhaps I was blushing too, as Stanislas had said. But if I was (and I honestly suspect he had but stated the truth), my timidity did not this time prevent my taking advantage of the golden opportunity which he had made for me.

"Following Bertha, I caught hold of her hand, and led her back, trembling and fawn-like, to the window which she had just left.

"It would be useless for me to endeavor to recount what passed between us, even were I disposed to do violence to natural delicacy by attempting to describe it in detail. I have felt no hesitation in putting into writing the facts of my varied life in America, but have

certainly no wish to remove the veil from the most sacred and delightful hour I had ever known. Such moments belong to ourselves. Nor are we required to probe and examine them, when we are transcribing the events in our biography for the casual reader's pleasure.

"Sufficient will it be, if I say that my expressions of true and fervent love were met by Bertha's tender avowal of reciprocal affection; and when Stanislas appeared, some three hours later, in the room, where he said that he 'came to know whether we had yet settled our differences of opinion,' we were astonished to find that we had been alone in each other's society more than some twenty minutes.

"I told the baron,' he continued, 'that the two of you were very deeply engaged in discussing a matter of natural history. He consequently refrained from passing his afternoon, as he usually does, amongst his books, and actually rode over with me to the new plantation.'

"Ere he had concluded, Bertha had run from the library, and left me by myself to bear the kind-hearted jests of my friend. I may safely say that these were submitted to by me with a very good grace and patience, which I may advance as an example to all who have to endure a similar affliction.

"That evening I led Bertha to her father, and told

him, that, at last owing to the absence of bashfulness on the part of Stanislas, I had dared to plead my cause.

“‘And I see,’ he said, glancing at Bertha, ‘that you have been successful. I give her to you cheerfully. You have been the architect, under the help of Providence, of your own fortune. To you I confide her happiness.’

“On the following day, I had a long interview with the baron, and told him precisely the condition of my affairs.

“By his advice, I decided upon purchasing the beautiful estate of Rednitz, which was then for sale, and which adjoined that of Wolfenstein. The papers transferring this property to me were made out some three weeks later, after some little difficulty in arranging the terms of purchase with its then owner.

“Through the baron’s credit at court, I also received the king’s permission to bear the name of the domain.

“It was in vain, however, that I begged the baron to allow me to wed my charming Bertha immediately.

“He decided that our marriage should take place exactly one year after my return to my old friends, and insisted that, during the remaining months, I should take up my residence upon my new estate.

“Nor would he give way in his decision, although

Stanislas added his entreaties to mine, and they were strengthened by Bertha's timid silence.

“‘No, William. After giving up my child to you in the future, I have the right to ask your forbearance for the present,’ he said. ‘She is very young; and you are by no means’—in saying this, he laughed—‘an old man. You can both of you very well afford to wait. Besides, you will be able to see her every day; for what are eleven miles to such a daring horseman and loving cavalier as you are?’

“So it was settled; and it was only on the anniversary of my return, that the baron gave my darling to me as my wife, and enabled me to call myself one of the happiest as well as most fortunate of human beings.”





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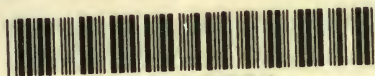
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